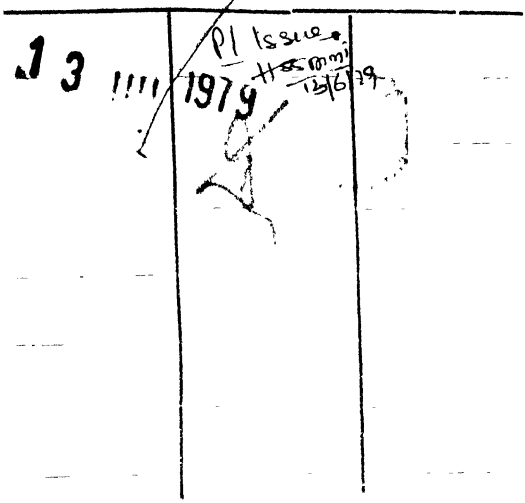


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THE SUSSEX EDITION OF THE COMPLETE
WORKS IN PROSE AND VERSE OF

RUDYARD KIPLING

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VOLUME XXXIII

THE SEVEN SEAS
THE FIVE NATIONS
THE YEARS BETWEEN

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THE SEVEN SEAS

AND BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

1893-1896

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1938

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

DEDICATION

TO THE CITY OF BOMBAY

1894

THE Cities are full of pride,
Challenging each to each—
This from her mountain-side,
That from her burdened beach.

They count their ships full tale—
Their corn and oil and wine,
Derrick and loom and bale,
And ramparts' gun-flecked line;
City by City they hail:
'Hast aught to match with mine?'

And the men that breed from them
They traffic up and down,
But cling to their cities' hem
As a child to the mother's gown;

When they talk with the stranger bands,
Dazed and newly alone;
When they walk in the stranger lands,
By roaring streets unknown;
Blessing her where she stands
For strength above their own.

(On high to hold her fame
That stands all fame beyond,
By oath to back the same,
Most faithful-foolish-fond;
Making her mere-breathed name
Their bond upon their bond.)

So thank I God my birth
Fell not in isles aside—
Waste headlands of the earth,
Or warring tribes untried—
But that she lent me worth
And gave me right to pride.

Surely in toil or fray
Under an alien sky,
Comfort it is to say:
'Of no mean city am I!'

(Neither by service nor fee
Come I to mine estate—
Mother of Cities to me,
But I was born in her gate,
Between the palms and the sea,
Where the world-end steamers wait.)

Now for this debt I owe,
And for her far-borne cheer
Must I make haste and go
With tribute to her pier.

And she shall touch and remit
After the use of Kings
(Orderly, ancient, fit)
My deep-sea plunderings,
And purchase in all lands.
And this we do for a sign
Her power is over mine,
And mine I hold at her hands!

THE SEVEN SEAS

1896

A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

1893

FAIR is our lot—Oh, goodly is our heritage!
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!
For the Lord our God Most High
He hath made the deep as dry,
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the
Earth!

Yea, though we sinned, and our rulers went from righteous-
ness—
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garments' hem,
Oh, be ye not dismayed,
Though we stumbled and we strayed,
We were led by evil counsellors—the Lord shall deal with
them!

Hold ye the Faith—the Faith our Fathers sealèd us;
Whoring not with visions—overwise and overstale.
Except ye pay the Lord
Single heart and single sword,
Of your children in their bondage He shall ask them treble-
tale!

Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.

Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown;
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve
the Lord!

. . . . . .

Hear now a song—a song of broken interludes—
A song of little cunning; of a singer nothing worth.
Through the naked words and mean
May ye see the truth between,
As the singer knew and touched it in the ends of all the
Earth!

★

THE COASTWISE LIGHTS

OUR brows are bound with spindrift and the weed is
on our knees;
Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging,
smoking seas.
From reef and rock and skerry—over headland, ness,
and voe—
The Coastwise Lights of England watch the ships of
England go!

Through the endless summer evenings, on the lineless,
level floors;
Through the yelling Channel tempest when the siren
hoots and roars—
By day the dipping house-flag and by night the rocket's
trail—
As the sheep that graze behind us so we know them
where they hail.

We bridge across the dark, and bid the helmsman
have a care,
The flash that, wheeling inland, wakes his sleeping
wife to prayer.
From our vexed eyries, head to gale, we bind in burn-
ing chains
The lover from the sea-rim drawn—his love in English
lanes.

We greet the clippers wing-and-wing that race the
Southern wool;
We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith,
and Hull;
To each and all our equal lamp at peril of the sea—
The white wall-sided warships or the whalers of
Dundee!

Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guard-
ports of the Morn!
Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the
Horn!
Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us main
to main,
The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome
back again!

Go, get you gone up-Channel with the sea-crust on
your plates;
Go, get you into London with the burden of your
freights!

Haste, for they talk of Empire there, and say, if any seek,
The Lights of England sent you and by silence shall ye speak!

★

THE SONG OF THE DEAD

HEAR now the Song of the Dead—in the North by the torn berg-edges—
They that look still to the Pole, asleep by their hide-stripped sledges.
Song of the Dead in the South—in the sun by their skeleton horses,
Where the warrigal whimpers and bays through the dust of the sere river-courses.

Song of the Dead in the East—in the heat-rotted jungle-hollows,
Where the dog-ape barks in the kloof—in the brake of the buffalo-wallows,
Song of the Dead in the West—in the Barrens, the pass that betrayed them,
Where the wolverine tumbles their packs from the camp and the grave-mound they made them;
Hear now the Song of the Dead!

I

WE were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
We yearned beyond the skyline where the strange roads go down.

Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with the Need,
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.
As the deer breaks—as the steer breaks—from the herd where they graze,
In the faith of little children we went on our ways.
Then the wood failed—then the food failed—then the last water dried—
In the faith of little children we lay down and died.
On the sand-drift—on the veldt-side—in the fern-scrub we lay,
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the way.
Follow after—follow after! We have watered the root,
And the bud has come to blossom that ripens for fruit!
Follow after—we are waiting, by the trails that we lost,
For the sounds of many footsteps, for the tread of a host.
Follow after—follow after—for the harvest is sown:
By the bones about the wayside ye shall come to your own!

WHEN Drake went down to the Horn
And England was crowned thereby,
'Twixt seas unsailed and shores unhailed
Our Lodge—our Lodge was born
(And England was crowned thereby!)

Which never shall close again
By day nor yet by night,
While man shall take his life to stake
At risk of shoal or main
(By day nor yet by night),

But standeth even so
As now we witness here,
While men depart, of joyful heart,
Adventure for to know
(As now bear witness here!)

II

We have fed our sea for a thousand years
And she calls us, still unfed,
Though there's never a wave of all her waves
But marks our English dead:
We have strawed our best to the weed's unrest,
To the shark and the sheering gull.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we ha' paid in full!

There's never a flood goes shoreward now
But lifts a keel we manned;
There's never an ebb goes seaward now
But drops our dead on the sand—
But slinks our dead on the sands forlore,
From the Ducies to the Swin.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we ha' paid it in!

A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

We must feed our sea for a thousand years,
For that is our doom and pride,
As it was when they sailed with the *Golden Hind*,
Or the wreck that struck last tide—
Or the wreck that lies on the spouting reef
Where the ghastly blue-lights flare.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we ha' bought it fair!

★

THE DEEP-SEA CABLES

THE wrecks dissolve above us; their dust drops down from afar—
Down to the dark, to the utter dark, where the blind white sea-snakes are.
There is no sound, no echo of sound, in the deserts of the deep,
Or the great grey level plains of ooze where the shell-burred cables creep.

Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of earth—
Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and beat—
Warning, sorrow, and gain, salutation and mirth—
For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor feet.

They have wakened the timeless Things; they have killed their father Time;
Joining hands in the gloom, a league from the last of the sun.
Hush! Men talk to-day o'er the waste of the ultimate slime,
And a new Word runs between: whispering, 'Let us be one!'

★

THE SONG OF THE SONS

ONE from the ends of the Earth—gifts at an open door—
Treason has much, but we, Mother, thy sons have more!
From the whine of a dying man, from the snarl of a wolf-pack freed,
Turn, and the world is thine. Mother, be proud of thy seed!
Count, are we feeble or few? Hear, is our speech so rude?
Look, are we poor in the land? Judge, are we men of The Blood?

Those that have stayed at thy knees, Mother, go call them in—
We that were bred overseas wait and would speak with our kin.
Not in the dark do we fight—haggle and flout and gibe;

Selling our love for a price, loaning our hearts for a bribe.
Gifts have we only to-day—Love without promise or fee—
Hear, for thy children speak, from the uttermost parts of the sea!

★

THE SONG OF THE CITIES

BOMBAY

ROYAL and Dower-royal, I the Queen
Fronting thy richest sea with richer hand —
A thousand mills roar through me where I glean
All races from all lands.

CALCUTTA

Me the Sea-captain loved, the River built,
Wealth sought and Kings adventured life to hold.
Hail, England! I am Asia—Power on silt,
Death in my hands, but Gold!

MADRAS

Clive kissed me on the mouth and eyes and brow,
Wonderful kisses, so that I became
Crowned above Queens—a withered beldame now,
Brooding on ancient fame.

RANGOON

Hail, Mother! Do they call me rich in trade?
  Little care I, but hear the shorn priest drone,
And watch my silk-clad lovers, man by maid,
  Laugh 'neath my Shwe Dagon.

SINGAPORE

Hail, Mother! East and West must seek my aid
  Ere the spent hull may dare the ports afar.
The second doorway of the wide world's trade
  Is mine to loose or bar.

HONG KONG

Hail, Mother! Hold me fast; my Praya sleeps
  Under innumerable keels to-day.
Yet guard (and landward), or to-morrow sweeps
  Thy warships down the bay!

HALIFAX

Into the mist my guardian prows put forth,
  Behind the mist my virgin ramparts lie,
The Warden of the Honour of the North,
  Sleepless and veiled am I!

QUEBEC AND MONTREAL

Peace is our portion. Yet a whisper rose,
  Foolish and causeless, half in jest, half hate.
Now wake we and remember mighty blows,
  And, fearing no man, wait!

VICTORIA

From East to West the circling word has passed,
  Till West is East beside our land-locked blue;
From East to West the tested chain holds fast,
  The well-forged link rings true!

CAPE TOWN

Hail! Snatched and bartered oft from hand to hand,
  I dream my dream, by rock and heath and pine,
Of Empire to the northward. Ay, one land
  From Lion's Head to Line!

MELBOURNE

Greeting! Nor fear nor favour won us place,
  Got between greed of gold and dread of drouth,
Loud-voiced and reckless as the wild tide-race
  That whips our harbour-mouth!

SYDNEY

Greeting! My birth-stain have I turned to good;
  Forcing strong wills perverse to steadfastness:
The first flush of the Tropics in my blood,
  And at my feet Success!

BRISBANE

The northern stock beneath the southern skies—
  I build a Nation for an Empire's need,

Suffer a little, and my land shall rise,
  Queen over lands indeed!

HOBART

Man's love first found me; man's hate made me Hell;
  For my babes' sake I cleansed those infamies.
Earnest for leave to live and labour well,
  God flung me peace and ease.

AUCKLAND

Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart—
  On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,
Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart
  To seek the Happy Isles!

★

ENGLAND'S ANSWER

TRULY ye come of The Blood; slower to bless than to ban,
Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man—
Flesh of the flesh that I bred, bone of the bone that I bare;
Stark as your sons shall be—stern as your fathers were.
Deeper than speech our love, stronger than life our tether,
But we do not fall on the neck nor kiss when we come together.
My arm is nothing weak, my strength is not gone by;

Sons, I have borne many sons, but my dugs are not dry.
Look, I have made ye a place and opened wide the doors,
That ye may talk together, your Barons and Councillors—
Wards of the Outer March, Lords of the Lower Seas,
Ay, talk to your grey Mother that bore you on her knees!—
That ye may talk together, brother to brother's face—
Thus for the good of your peoples—thus for the Pride of the Race.
Also, we will make promise. So long as The Blood endures,
I shall know that your good is mine: ye shall feel that my strength is yours:
In the day of Armageddon, at the last great fight of all,
That Our House stand together and the pillars do not fall.
Draw now the threefold knot firm on the ninefold bands,
And the Law that ye make shall be law after the rule of your lands.
This for the waxen Heath, and that for the Wattle-bloom,
This for the Maple-leaf, and that for the Southern Broom.
The Law that ye make shall be law and I do not press my will,
Because ye are Sons of The Blood and call me Mother still.

Now must ye speak to your kinsmen and they must
speak to you,
After the use of the English, in straight-flung words
and few,
Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your
ways,
Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of
praise.
Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword
and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a
world of men!

THE FIRST CHANTEY

1896

Mine was the woman to me, darkling I found her:
Haling her dumb from the camp, held her and bound her.
Hot rose her Tribe on our track ere I had proved her;
Hearing her laugh in the gloom, greatly I loved her.

Swift through the forest we ran, none stood to guard us,
Few were my people and far; then the flood barred us—
Him we call Son of the Sea, sullen and swollen.
Panting we waited the death, stealer and stolen.

Yet ere they came to my lance laid for the slaughter,
Lightly she leaped to a log lapped in the water;
Holding on high and apart skins that arrayed her,
Called she the God of the Wind that He should aid her.

Life had the tree at that word (Praise we the Giver!),
Otter-like left he the bank for the full river.
Far fell their axes behind, flashing and ringing,
Wonder was on me and fear—yet she was singing!

Low lay the land we had left. Now the blue bound us,
Even the Floor of the Gods level around us.

Whisper there was not, nor word, shadow nor showing,
Till the light stirred on the deep, glowing and growing.

Then did He leap to His place flaring from under,
He the Compeller, the Sun, bared to our wonder.
Nay, not a league from our eyes blinded with gazing,
Cleared He the Gate of the World, huge and amazing!

This we beheld (and we live)—the Pit of the Burning!
Then the God spoke to the tree for our returning;
Back to the beach of our flight, fearless and slowly,
Back to our slayers went he; but we were holy.

Men that were hot in that hunt, women that followed,
Babes that were promised our bones, trembled and wallowed!
Over the necks of the Tribe crouching and fawning—
Prophet and Priestess we came back from the dawning!

THE LAST CHANTEY

1892

And there was no more sea.—*Revelations* xxi. 1.

THUS said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:
'Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the Sea?'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly Mariners:
'Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink the Sea!'

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayèd Him:
'Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe?
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the Sea!'

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):

'I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honour from me if Ye take away
the Sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly Mariners:
'Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we.
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamour for a vengeance on the Sea?'

Then said the souls of the Slaves that men threw overboard:
'Kennelled in the picaroon a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy
Trumpets tore the Sea.'

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God:
'Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured
woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under
Malta by the Sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly Mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:
'Our thumbs are rough and tarred,

And the tune is something hard—
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as seamen use
at sea?'

Then said the souls of the Gentlemen-Adventurers—
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
'Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's!
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters
of the Sea!'

Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn 'speckshioner—
(He that led the flenching in the fleets of fair
Dundee):
'Oh, the ice-blink white and near,
And the bowhead breaching clear!
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow
in the Sea?'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly Mariners,
Crying: 'Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open
sea!'

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good Sea
up to Him,
And 'stablishèd its borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the
Sea.

Sun, wind, and cloud shall fail not from the face of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the Glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back their
Sea!

THE MERCHANTMEN

1893

KING SOLOMON drew merchantmen,
Because of his desire
For peacocks, apes, and ivory,
From Tarshish unto Tyre,
With cedars out of Lebanon
Which Hiram rafted down;
But we be only sailormen
That use in London Town.

Coastwise—cross-seas—round the world and back again—
Where the flaw shall head us or the full Trade suits—
Plain-sail—storm-sail—lay your board and tack again—
And that's the way we'll pay Paddy Doyle for his boots!

We bring no store of ingots,
Of spice or precious stones,
But what we have we gathered
With sweat and aching bones:
In flame beneath the Tropics,
In frost upon the floe,
And jeopardy of every wind
That does between them go.

And some we got by purchase,
And some we had by trade,
And some we found by courtesy
Of pike and carronade—

At midnight, 'mid-sea meetings,
For charity to keep,
And light the rolling homeward-bound
That rode a foot too deep!

By sport of bitter weather
We're walty, strained, and scarred
From the kentledge on the kelson
To the slings upon the yard.
Six oceans had their will of us
To carry all away—
Our galley's in the Baltic,
And our boom's in Mossel Bay.

We've floundered off the Texel,
Awash with sodden deals,
We've slipped from Valparaiso
With the Norther at our heels:
We've ratched beyond the Crossets
That tusk the Southern Pole,
And dipped our gunnels under
To the dread Agulhas roll.

Beyond all outer charting
We sailed where none have sailed,
And saw the land-lights burning
On islands none have hailed;
Our hair stood up for wonder,
But, when the night was done,
There danced the deep to windward
Blue-empty 'neath the sun!

Strange consorts rode beside us
  And brought us evil luck;
The witch-fire climbed our channels,
  And flared on vane and truck,
Till, through the red tornado,
  That lashed us nigh to blind,
We saw The Dutchman plunging,
  Full canvas, head to wind!

We've heard the Midnight Leadsman
  That calls the black deep down—
Ay, thrice we've heard The Swimmer,
  The Thing that may not drown.
On frozen bunt and gasket
  The sleet-cloud drave her hosts,
When, manned by more than signed with us,
  We passed the Isle of Ghosts!

And north, amid the hummocks,
  A biscuit-toss below,
We met the silent shallop
  That frighted whalers know;
For, down a cruel ice-lane,
  That opened as he sped,
We saw dead Hendrick Hudson
  Steer, North by West, his dead.

So dealt God's waters with us
  Beneath the roaring skies,
So walked His signs and marvels
  All naked to our eyes:

But we were heading homeward
With trade to lose or make—
Good Lord, they slipped behind us
In the tailing of our wake!

Let go, let go the anchors;
Now shamed at heart are we
To bring so poor a cargo home
That had for gift the sea!
Let go the great bow-anchor—
Ah, fools were we and blind—
The worst we stored with utter toil,
The best we left behind!

Coastwise—cross-seas—round the world and back again,
Whither flaw shall fail us or the Trades drive down:
Plain-sail—storm-sail—lay your board and tack again—
And all to bring a cargo up to London Town!

McANDREW'S HYMN

1893

LORD, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of a dream,
An', taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.
From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God—
Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.
John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enormous, certain, slow—
Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—*my* 'Institutio.'
I cannot get my sleep to-night; old bones are hard to please;
I'll stand the middle watch up here—alone wi' God an' these
My engines, after ninety days o' race an' rack an' strain
Through all the seas of all Thy world, slam-bangin' home again.
Slam-bang too much—they knock a wee—the cross-head-gibs are loose,
But thirty thousand mile o' sea has gied them fair excuse. . . .
Fine, clear an' dark—a full-draught breeze, wi' Ushant out o' sight,
An' Ferguson relievin' Hay. Old girl, ye'll walk to-night!
His wife's at Plymouth. . . . Seventy—One—Two—Three since he began—

Three turns for Mistress Ferguson . . . and who's to
blame the man?
There's none at any port for me, by drivin' fast or
slow,
Since Elsie Campbell went to Thee, Lord, thirty years
ago.
(The year the *Sarah Sands* was burned. Oh, roads we
used to tread,
Fra' Maryhill to Pollokshaws—fra' Govan to Park-
head!)
Not but they're ceevil on the Board. Ye'll hear Sir
Kenneth say:
'Good morrn, McAndrew! Back again? An' how's
your bilge to-day?'
Miscallin' technicalities but handin' me my chair
To drink Madeira wi' three Earls—the auld Fleet
Engineer
That started as a boiler-whelp—when steam and he
were low.
I mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi'
tow!
Ten pound was all the pressure then—Eh! Eh!—a man
wad drive;
An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder sixty-
five!
We're creepin' on wi' each new rig—less weight an'
larger power;
There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty mile an hour!
Thirty an' more. What I ha' seen since ocean-steam
began
Leaves me na doot for the machine: but what about
the man?

The man that counts, wi' all his runs, one million mile o' sea:
Four time the span from earth to moon. . . . How far, O Lord, from Thee
That wast beside him night and day? Ye mind my first typhoon?
It scoughed the skipper on his way to jock wi' the saloon.
Three feet were on the stokehold floor—just slappin' to an' fro—
An' cast me on a furnace-door. I have the marks to show.
Marks! I ha' marks o' more than burns—deep in my soul an' black,
An' times like this, when things go smooth, my wickedness comes back.
The sins o' four-and-forty years, all up an' down the seas,
Clack an' repeat like valves half-fed. . . . Forgie's our trespasses!
Nights when I'd come on deck to mark, wi' envy in my gaze,
The couples kittlin' in the dark between the funnel-stays;
Years when I raked the Ports wi' pride to fill my cup o' wrong—
Judge not, O Lord, my steps aside at Gay Street in Hong Kong!
Blot out the wastrel hours of mine in sin when I abode—
Jane Harrigan's an' Number Nine, The Reddick an' Grant Road!

An' waur than all—my crownin' sin—rank blasphemy an' wild.
I wasna four-and-twenty then—Ye wadna judge a child?
I'd seen the Tropics first that run—new fruits, new smells, new air—
How could I tell—blind-fou wi' sun—the Deil was lurkin' there?
By day like playhouse-scenes the shore slid past our sleepy eyes;
By night those soft, lasceevious stars leered from those velvet skies,
In port (we used no cargo-steam) I'd daunder down the streets—
An ijjit grinnin' in a dream—for shells an' parrakeets,
An' walkin'-sticks o' carved bamboo an' blowfish stuffed an' dried—
Fillin' my bunk wi' rubbishry the Chief put over-side,
Till, off Sambawa Head, Ye mind, I heard a land-breeze ca',
Milk-warm wi' breath o' spice an' bloom: 'McAndrew, come awa'!'
Firm, clear an' low—no haste, no hate—the ghostly whisper went,
Just statin' eevidential facts beyon' all argument:
'Your mither's God's a graspin' deil, the shadow o' yoursel',
Got out o' books by meenisters clean daft on Heaven an' Hell.
They mak' Him in the Broomielaw, o' Glasgie cold an' dirt,

A jealous, pridefu' fetish, lad, that's only strong to hurt.
Ye'll not go back to Him again an' kiss His red-hot rod,
But come wi' Us' (Now, who were *They*?) 'an' know the Leevin' God,
That does not kipper souls for sport or break a life in jest,
But swells the ripenin' coconuts an' ripes the won an's breast.'
An' there it stopped—cut off—no more—that quiet, certain voice—
For me, six months o' twenty-four, to leave or take at choice.
'Twas on me like a thunderclap—it racked me through an' through—
Temptation past the show o' speech, unnameable an' new—
The Sin against the Holy Ghost? . . . An' under all, our screw.

That storm blew by but left behind her anchor-shiftin' swell.
Thou knowest all my heart an' mind, Thou knowest, Lord, I fell—
Third on the *Mary Gloster* then, and first that night in Hell!
Yet was Thy Hand beneath my head, about my feet Thy Care—
Fra' Deli clear to Torres Strait, the trial o' despair,
But when we touched the Barrier Reef Thy answer to my prayer! . . .

We daredna run that sea by night but lay an' held our fire,
An' I was drowsin' on the hatch—sick—sick wi' doubt an' tire:
'*Better the sight of eyes that see than wanderin' o' desire!*'
Ye mind that word? Clear as our gongs—again, an' once again,
When rippin' down through coral-trash ran out our moorin'-chain:
An', by Thy Grace, I had the Light to see my duty plain.
Light on the engine-room—no more—bright as our carbons burn.
I've lost it since a thousand times, but never past return!

. . . . . .

Obsairve! Per annum we'll have here two thousand souls aboard—
Think not I dare to justify myself before the Lord,
But—average fifteen hunder souls safe-borne fra' port to port—
I *am* o' service to my kind. Ye wadna blame the thought?
Maybe they steam from Grace to Wrath—to sin by folly led,—
It isna mine to judge their path—their lives are on my head.
Mine at the last—when all is done it all comes back to me,
The fault that leaves six thousand ton a log upon the sea.

We'll tak' one stretch—three weeks an' odd by ony
road ye steer—
Fra' Cape Town east to Wellington—ye need an
engineer.
Fail there—ye've time to weld your shaft—ay, eat it
—ere ye're spoke;
Or make Kerguelen under sail—three jiggers burned
wi' smoke!
An' home again—the Rio run: it's no child's play to go
Steamin' to bell for fourteen days o' snow an' floe an'
blow.
The bergs like kelpies overside that girn an' turn an'
shift
Whaur, grindin' like the Mills o' God, goes by the
big South drift.
(Hail, Snow, an' Ice that praise the Lord. I've met
them at their work,
An' wished we had anither route or they anither kirk.)
Yon's strain, hard strain, o' head an' hand, for though
Thy Power brings
All skill to naught, Ye'll understand a man must think
o' things.
Then, at the last, we'll get to port an' hoist their bag-
gage clear—
The passengers, wi' gloves an' canes—an' this is what
I'll hear:
'Well, thank ye for a pleasant voyage. The tender's
comin' now.'
While I go testin' follower-bolts an' watch the skipper
bow.
They've words for every one but me—shake hands
wi' half the crew,

Except the dour Scots engineer, the man they never knew.
An' yet I like the wark for all we've dam'-few pickin's here—
No pension, an' the most we'll earn's four hunder pound a year.
Better myself abroad? Maybe. *I*'d sooner starve than sail
Wi' such as call a snifter-rod *ross*. . . . French for nightingale.
Commeession on my stores? Some do; but I can not afford
To lie like stewards wi' patty-pans. I'm older than the Board.
A bonus on the coal I save? Ou ay, the Scots are close,
But when I grudge the strength Ye gave I'll grudge their food to *those*.
(There's bricks that I might recommend—an' clink the fire-bars cruel.
No! Welsh—Wangarti at the warst—an' damn all patent fuel!)
Inventions? Ye must stay in port to mak' a patent pay.
My Deeferential Valve-Gear taught me how that business lay.
I blame no chaps wi' clearer heads for aught they make or sell.
I found that I could not invent an' look to these as well.
So, wrestled wi' Apollyon—Nah!—fretted like a bairn—
But burned the workin'-plans last run, wi' all I hoped to earn.

Ye know how hard an Idol dies, an' what that meant
to me—
E'en tak' it for a sacrifice acceptable to Thee. . . .
*Below there! Oiler! What's your wark? Ye find it runnin'
hard?*
Ye needn't swill the cup wi' oil—this isn't the Cunard!
*Ye thought? Ye are not paid to think. Go, sweat that off
again!*
Tck! Tck! It's deeficult to sweer nor tak' The Name
in vain!
Men, ay an' women, call me stern. Wi' these to over-
see,
Ye'll note I've little time to burn on social repartee.
The bairns see what their elders miss; they'll hunt me
to an' fro,
Till for the sake of—well, a kiss—I tak' 'em down below.
That minds me of our Viscount loon—Sir Kenneth's
kin—the chap
Wi' Russia-leather tennis-shoon an' spar-decked
yachtin'-cap.
I showed him round last week, o'er all—an' at the last
says he:
'Mister McAndrew, don't you think steam spoils ro-
mance at sea?'
Damned ijjit! I'd been doon that morn to see what
ailed the throws,
Manholin', on my back—the cranks three inches off my
nose.
Romance! Those first-class passengers they like it very
well,
Printed an' bound in little books; but why don't poets
tell?

I'm sick of all their quirks an' turns—the loves an' doves they dream—
Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o' Steam!
To match wi' Scotia's noblest speech yon orchestra sublime
Whaurto—uplifted like the Just—the tail-rods mark the time.
The crank-throws give the double-bass, the feed-pump sobs an' heaves,
An' now the main eccentrics start their quarrel on the sheaves:
Her time, her own appointed time, the rockin' link-head bides,
Till—hear that note?—the rod's return whings glimmerin' through the guides.
They're all awa'! True beat, full power, the clangin' chorus goes
Clear to the tunnel where they sit, my purrin' dynamoes.
Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,
To work, Ye'll note, at ony tilt an' every rate o' speed.
Fra' skylight-lift to furnace-bars, backed, bolted, braced an' stayed,
An' singin' like the Mornin' Stars for joy that they are made;
While, out o' touch o' vanity, the sweatin' thrust-block says:
'Not unto us the praise, or man—not unto us the praise!'
Now, a'together, hear them lift their lesson—theirs an' mine:

'Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!'
Mill, forge an' try-pit taught them that when roarin' they arose,
An' whiles I wonder if a soul was gied them wi' the blows.
Oh for a man to weld it then, in one trip-hammer strain,
Till even first-class passengers could tell the meanin' plain!
But no one cares except mysel' that serve an' understand
My seven thousand horse-power here. Eh, Lord! They're grand—they're grand!
Uplift, am I? When first in store the new-made beauties stood,
Were Ye cast down that breathed the Word declarin' all things good?
Not so! O' that warld-liftin' joy no after-fall could vex,
Ye've left a glimmer still to cheer the Man—the Arrtifex!
That holds, in spite o' knock an' scale, o' friction, waste an' slip,
An' by that light—now, mark my word—we'll build the Perfect Ship.
I'll never last to judge her lines or take her curve—not I.
But I ha' lived an' I ha' worked. Be thanks to Thee, Most High!
An' I ha' done what I ha' done—judge Thou if ill or well—

Always Thy Grace preventin' me. . . .
Losh! Yon's the 'Stand-by' bell.
Pilot so soon? His flare it is. The mornin'-watch is set.
Well, God be thanked, as I was sayin', I'm no Pelagian yet.
Now, I'll tak' on. . . .
'Morrn, Ferguson. Man, have ye ever thought
What your good leddy costs in coal? . . . I'll burn 'em down to port.

THE MIRACLES

1894

I SENT a message to my dear—
A thousand leagues and more to Her—
The dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear,
And Lost Atlantis bore to Her!

Behind my message hard I came,
And nigh had found a grave for me;
But that I launched of steel and flame
Did war against the wave for me.

Uprose the deep, in gale on gale,
To bid me change my mind again—
He broke his teeth along my rail,
And, roaring, swung behind again.

I stayed the sun at noon to tell
My way across the waste of it;
I read the storm before it fell
And made the better haste of it.

Afar, I hailed the land at night—
The towers I built had heard of me—
And, ere my rocket reached its height,
Had flashed my Love the word of me.

Earth sold her chosen men of strength
  (They lived and strove and died for me)
To drive my road a nation's length,
  And toss the miles aside for me.

I snatched their toil to serve my needs—
  Too slow their fleetest flew for me.
I tired twenty smoking steeds,
  And bade them bait a new for me.

I sent the Lightnings forth to see
  Where hour by hour She waited me.
Among ten million one was She,
  And surely all men hated me!

Dawn ran to meet me at my goal—
  Ah, day no tongue shall tell again!
And little folk of little soul
  Rose up to buy and sell again!

THE NATIVE-BORN

1894

WE'VE drunk to the Queen—God bless her!—
We've drunk to our mothers' land;
We've drunk to our English brother
(But he does not understand);
We've drunk to the wide creation,
And the Cross swings low for the morn;
Last toast, and of Obligation,
A health to the Native-born!

They change their skies above them,
But not their hearts that roam!
We learned from our wistful mothers
To call old England 'Home';
We read of the English skylark,
Of the spring in the English lanes,
But we screamed with the painted lories
As we rode on the dusty plains!

They passed with their old-world legends
Their tales of wrong and dearth—
Our fathers held by purchase,
But we by the right of birth;
Our heart's where they rocked our cradle,
Our love where we spent our toil,
And our faith and our hope and our honour
We pledge to our native soil!

I charge you charge your glasses—
  I charge you drink with me
To the men of the Four New Nations,
  And the Islands of the Sea—
To the last least lump of coral,
  That none may stand outside,
And our own good pride shall teach us
  To praise our comrade's pride.

To the hush of the breathless morning
  On the thin, tin, crackling roofs,
To the haze of the burned back-ranges
  And the dust of the shoeless hoofs—
To the risk of a death by drowning,
  To the risk of a death by drouth—
To the men of a million acres,
  To the Sons of the Golden South!

To the Sons of the Golden South (Stand up!),
  And the life we live and know,
Let a fellow sing o' the little things he cares about,
If a fellow fights for the little things he cares about
  With the weight of a single blow!

To the smoke of a hundred coasters,
  To the sheep on a thousand hills,
To the sun that never blisters,
  To the rain that never chills—
To the land of the waiting springtime,
  To our five-meal, meat-fed men,
To the tall, deep-bosomed women,
  And the children nine and ten!

And the children nine and ten (Stand up!),
And the life we live and know,
Let a fellow sing o' the little things he cares about,
If a fellow fights for the little things he cares about
With the weight of a two-fold blow!

To the far-flung, fenceless prairie
Where the quick cloud-shadows trail,
To our neighbour's barn in the offing
And the line of the new-cut rail;
To the plough in her league-long furrow
With the grey Lake gulls behind—
To the weight of a half-year's winter
And the warm wet western wind!

To the home of the floods and thunder,
To her pale, dry, healing blue—
To the lift of the great Cape combers,
And the smell of the baked Karroo.
To the growl of the sluicing stamp-head—
To the reef and the water-gold,
To the last and the largest Empire,
To the map that is half unrolled!

To our dear dark foster-mothers,
To the heathen songs they sung—
To the heathen speech we babbled
Ere we came to the white man's tongue.
To the cool of our deep verandas—
To the blaze of our jewelled main,
To the night, to the palms in the moonlight,
And the fire-fly in the cane!

To the hearth of Our People's People—
  To her well-ploughed windy sea,
To the hush of our dread High Altar
  Where The Abbey makes us We,
To the grist of the slow-ground ages,
  To the gain that is yours and mine—
To the Bank of the Open Credit,
  To the Power-house of the Line!

We've drunk to the Queen—God bless her!—
  We've drunk to our mothers' land;
We've drunk to our English brother
  (And we hope he'll understand);
We've drunk as much as we're able,
  And the Cross swings low for the morn;
Last toast—and your foot on the table!—
  A health to the Native-born!

A health to the Native-born (Stand-up!),
  We're six white men arow,
All bound to sing o' the little things we care about,
All bound to fight for the little things we care about
  With the weight of a six-fold blow!
By the might of our Cable-tow (Take hands!),
  From the Orkneys to the Horn
All round the world (and a little loop to pull it by),
All round the world (and a little strap to buckle it),
  A health to the Native-born!

THE KING

1894

'FAREWELL, Romance!' the Cave-men said;
'With bone well carved He went away.
Flint arms the ignoble arrowhead,
And jasper tips the spear to-day.
Changed are the Gods of Hunt and Dance,
And He with these. Farewell, Romance!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Lake-folk sighed;
'We lift the weight of flatling years;
The caverns of the mountain-side
Hold Him who scorns our hutted piers.
Lost hills whereby we dare not dwell,
Guard ye His rest. Romance, farewell!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Soldier spoke;
'By sleight of sword we may not win,
But scuffle 'mid uncleanly smoke
Of arquebus and culverin.
Honour is lost, and none may tell
Who paid good blows. Romance, farewell!'

'Farewell, Romance!' the Traders cried;
'Our keels have lain with every sea.
The dull-returning wind and tide
Heave up the wharf where we would be;
The known and noted breezes swell
Our trudging sails. Romance, farewell!'

'Good-bye, Romance!' the Skipper said;
'He vanished with the coal we burn.
Our dial marks full-steam ahead,
Our speed is timed to half a turn.
Sure as the ferried barge we ply
'Twixt port and port. Romance, good-bye!'

'Romance!' the season-tickets mourn;
'*He* never ran to catch his train,
But passed with coach and guard and horn—
And left the agent—Late again!
Confound Romance!' . . . And all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

His hand was on the lever laid,
His oil-can soothed the worrying cranks,
His whistle waked the snowbound grade,
His fog-horn cut the reeking Banks;
By dock and deep and mine and mill
The Boy-god reckless laboured still!

Robed, crowned and throned, He wove His spell,
Where heart-blood beat or hearth-smoke curled,
With unconsidered miracle,
Hedged in a backward-gazing world:
Then taught His chosen bard to say:
'Our King was with us—yesterday!'

THE RHYME OF THE THREE SEALERS

1893

AWAY by the lands of the Japanee
Where the paper lanterns glow
And the crews of all the shipping drink
In the house of Blood Street Joe,
At twilight, when the landward breeze
Brings up the harbour noise,
And ebb of Yokohama Bay
Swigs chattering through the buoys,
In Cisco's Dewdrop Dining Rooms
They tell the tale anew
Of a hidden sea and a hidden fight,
When the Baltic *ran from the* Northern Light,
And the Stralsund *fought the two.*

Now this is the Law of the Muscovite, that he proves with shot and steel,
When you come by his isles in the Smoky Sea you must not take the seal,
Where the grey sea goes nakedly between the weed-hung shelves,
And the little blue fox he is bred for his skin and the seal they breed for themselves.
For when the *matkas*[1] seek the shore to drop their pups aland,
The great man-seal haul out of the sea, a-roaring, band by band.

[1] She-seals.

And when the first September gales have slaked their rutting-wrath,
The great man-seal haul back to the sea and no man knows their path.
Then dark they lie and stark they lie—rookery, dune, and floe,
And the Northern Lights come down o' nights to dance with the houseless snow;
And God Who clears the grounding berg and steers the grinding floe,
He hears the cry of the little kit-fox and the wind along the snow.
But since our women must walk gay and money buys their gear,
The sealing-boats they filch that way at hazard year by year.
English they be and Japanee that hang on the Brown Bear's flank,
And some be Scot, but the worst of the lot, and the boldest thieves, are Yank!

It was the sealer *Northern Light*, to the Smoky Seas she bore,
With a stovepipe stuck from a starboard port and the Russian flag at her fore.
(*Baltic*, *Stralsund*, and *Northern Light*—oh! they were birds of a feather—
Slipping away to the Smoky Seas, three seal-thieves together!)
And at last she came to a sandy cove and the *Baltic* lay therein,

But her men were up with the herding seal to drive
and club and skin.
There were fifteen hundred skins abeach, cool pelt and
proper fur,
When the *Northern Light* drove into the bight and the
sea-mist drove with her.
The *Baltic* called her men and weighed—she could not
choose but run—
For a stovepipe seen through the closing mist, it shows
like a four-inch gun
(And loss it is that is sad as death to lose both trip and
ship
And lie for a rotting contraband on Vladivostok slip).
She turned and dived in the sea-smother as a rabbit
dives in the whins,
And the *Northern Light* sent up her boats to steal the
stolen skins.
They had not brought a load to side or slid their hatches
clear,
When they were aware of a sloop-of-war, ghost-white
and very near.
Her flag she showed, and her guns she showed—three
of them, black, abeam,
And a funnel white with the crusted salt, but never a
show of steam.

There was no time to man the brakes, they knocked
the shackle free,
And the *Northern Light* stood out again, goose-winged
to open sea.
(For life it is that is worse than death, by force of
Russian law,

To work in the mines of mercury that loose the teeth
in your jaw.)
They had not run a mile from shore—they heard no
shots behind—
When the skipper smote his hand on his thigh and
threw her up in the wind:
'Bluffed—raised out on a bluff,' said he, 'for if my
name's Tom Hall,
You must set a thief to catch a thief—and a thief has
caught us all!
By every butt in Oregon and every spar in Maine,
The hand that spilled the wind from her sail was the
hand of Reuben Paine!
He has rigged and trigged her with paint and spar,
and, faith, he has faked her well—
But I'd know the *Stralsund's* deckhouse yet from here
to the booms o' Hell.
Oh, once we ha' met at Baltimore, and twice on Bos-
ton pier,
But the sickest day for you, Reuben Paine, was the
day that you came here—
The day that you came here, my lad, to scare us from
our seal
With your funnel made o' your painted cloth, and your
guns o' rotten deal!
Ring and blow for the *Baltic* now, and head her back
to the bay,
And we'll come into the game again—with a double
deck to play!'

They rang and blew the sealers' call—the poaching-cry
of the sea—

And they raised the *Baltic* out of the mist, and an angry ship was she,
And blind they groped through the whirling white and blind to the bay again,
Till they heard the creak of the *Stralsund's* boom and the clank of her mooring-chain.
They laid them down by bitt and boat, their pistols in their belts,
And: 'Will you fight for it, Reuben Paine, or will you share the pelts?'

A dog-toothed laugh laughed Reuben Paine, and bared his flenching-knife.
'Yea, skin for skin, and all that he hath a man will give for his life;
'But I've six thousand skins below, and Yeddo port to see,
And there's never a law of God or man runs north of Fifty-Three:
So go in peace to the naked seas with empty holds to fill,
And I'll be good to your seal this catch, as many as I shall kill!'

Answered the snap of a closing lock—the jar of a gun-butt slid,
But the tender fog shut fold on fold to hide the wrong they did.
The weeping fog rolled fold on fold the wrath of man to cloak,
As the flame-spurts pale ran down the rail and the sealing-rifles spoke.

The bullets bit on bend and butt, the splinter slivered free
(Little they trust to sparrow-dust that stop the seal in his sea!),
The thick smoke hung and would not shift, leaden it lay and blue,
But three were down on the *Baltic's* deck and two of the *Stralsund's* crew.
An arm's length out and overside the banked fog held them bound,
But, as they heard or groan or word, they fired at the sound.
For one cried out on the Name of God, and one to have him cease,
And the questing volley found them both and bade them hold their peace.
And one called out on a heathen joss and one on the Virgin's Name,
And the schooling bullet leaped across and led them whence they came.
And in the waiting silences the rudder whined beneath,
And each man drew his watchful breath slow-taken 'tween the teeth—
Trigger and ear and eye acock, knit brow and hard-drawn lips—
Bracing his feet by chock and cleat for the rolling of the ships.
Till they heard the cough of a wounded man that fought in the fog for breath,
Till they heard the torment of Reuben Paine that wailed upon his death:

'The tides they'll go through Fundy Race, but I'll go never more
And see the hogs from ebb-tide mark turn scampering back to shore.
No more I'll see the trawlers drift below the Bass Rock ground,
Or watch the tall Fall steamer lights tear blazing up the Sound.
Sorrow is me, in a lonely sea and a sinful fight I fall,
But if there's law o' God or man you'll swing for it yet, Tom Hall!'

Tom Hall stood up by the quarter-rail. 'Your words in your teeth,' said he.
'There's never a law of God or man runs north of Fifty-Three.
So go in grace with Him to face, and an ill-spent life behind;
And I'll be good to your widows, Rube, as many as I shall find.'

A *Stralsund* man shot blind and large, and a warlock Finn was he,
And he hit Tom Hall with a bursting ball a hand's-breadth over the knee.
Tom Hall caught hold by the topping-lift, and sat him down with an oath,
'You wait a little, Rube,' he said, 'the Devil has called for both.
The Devil is driving both this tide, and the killing-grounds are close,

And we'll go up to the Wrath of God as the hollus-
chickie[1] goes.
O men, put back your guns again and lay your rifles
by,
We've fought our fight, and the best are down. Let
up and let us die!
Quit firing, by the bow there—quit! Call off the *Baltic's*
crew!
You're sure of Hell as me or Rube—but wait till we
get through.'

There went no word between the ships, but thick and
quick and loud
The life-blood drummed on the dripping decks, with
the fog-dew from the shroud.
The sea-pull drew them side by side, gunnel to gunnel
laid,
And they felt the sheer-strakes pound and clear, but
never a word was said.

Then Reuben Paine cried out again before his spirit
passed:—
'Have I followed the sea for thirty years to die in the
dark at last?
Curse on her work that has nipped me here with a
shifty trick unkind—
I have gotten my death where I got my bread, but I
dare not face it blind.
Curse on the fog! Is there never a wind of all the winds
I knew

[1] The young seal.

To clear the smother from off my chest, and let me look at the blue?'
The good fog heard—like a splitten sail, to left and right she tore,
And they saw the sun-dogs in the haze and the seal upon the shore.
Silver and grey ran spit and bay to meet the steep-backed tide,
And pinched and white in the clearing light the crews stared overside.
Oh, rainbow-gay the red pools lay that swilled and spilled and spread,
And gold, raw gold, the spent shells rolled between the careless dead—
The dead that rocked so drunkenwise to weather and to lee,
And they saw the work their hands had done as God had bade them see!

And a little breeze blew over the rail that made the headsails lift,
But no man stood by wheel or sheet, and they let the schooners drift.
And the rattle rose in Reuben's throat and he cast his soul with a cry,
And 'Gone already?' Tom Hall he said. 'Then it's time for me to die.'
His eyes were heavy with great sleep and yearning for the land,
And he spoke as a man that talks in dreams, his wound beneath his hand.

'Oh, there comes no good o' the westering wind that backs against the sun;
Wash down the decks—they're all too red—and share the skins and run,
Baltic, Stralsund, and *Northern Light*—clean share and share for all,
You'll find the fleets off Tolstoi Mees, but you will not find Tom Hall.
Evil he did in shoal-water and blacker sin on the deep,
But now he's sick of watch and trick and now he'll turn and sleep.
He'll have no more of the crawling sea that made him suffer so,
But he'll lie down on the killing-grounds where the holluschickie go.
And west you'll sail and south again, beyond the sea-fog's rim,
And tell the Yoshiwara girls to burn a stick for him.
And you'll not weight him by the heels and dump him overside,
But carry him up to the sand-hollows to die as Bering died,
And make a place for Reuben Paine that knows the fight was fair,
And leave the two that did the wrong to talk it over there!'

Half-steam ahead by guess and lead, for the sun is mostly veiled—
Through fog to fog, by luck and log, sail you as Bering sailed;
And if the light shall lift aright to give your landfall plain,

North and by west, from Zapne Crest ye raise the Crosses twain.
Fair marks are they to the inner bay, the reckless poacher knows,
What time the scarred see-catchie[1] *lead their sleek seraglios.*
Ever they hear the floe-pack clear, and the blast of the old bull-whale,
And the deep seal-roar that beats off-shore above the loudest gale.
Ever they wait the winter's hate as the thundering boo-ga[2] *calls,*
Where northward look they to St. George, and westward to St. Paul's.
Ever they greet the hunted fleet—lone keels off headlands drear—
When the sealing-schooners flit that way at hazard year by year.
Ever in Yokohama port men tell the tale anew
Of a hidden sea and a hidden fight,
When the Baltic *ran from the* Northern Light,
And the Stralsund *fought the two.*

[1] The male seal. [2] Hurricane.

THE DERELICT

1894

'And reports the derelict *Margaret Pollock* still at sea.'
-*Shipping News.*

I WAS the staunchest of our fleet
Till the sea rose beneath my feet
Unheralded, in hatred past all measure.
Into his pits he stamped my crew,
Buffeted, blinded, bound and threw,
Bidding me eyeless wait upon his pleasure.

Man made me, and my will
Is to my maker still,
Whom now the currents con, the rollers steer—
Lifting forlorn to spy
Trailed smoke along the sky,
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

Wrenched as the lips of thirst,
Wried, dried, and split and burst,
Bone-bleached my decks, wind-scoured to the graining;
And, jarred at every roll,
The gear that was my soul
Answers the anguish of my beams' complaining.

For life that crammed me full,
Gangs of the prying gull

That shriek and scrabble on the riven hatches.
For roar that dumbed the gale,
My hawse-pipes' guttering wail,
Sobbing my heart out through the uncounted watches.

Blind in the hot blue ring
Through all my points I swing—
Swing and return to shift the sun anew.
Blind in my well-known sky
I hear the stars go by,
Mocking the prow that cannot hold one true.

White on my wasted path
Wave after wave in wrath
Frets 'gainst his fellow, warring where to send me.
Flung forward, heaved aside,
Witless and dazed I bide
The mercy of the comber that shall end me.

North where the bergs careen,
The spray of seas unseen
Smokes round my head and freezes in the falling.
South where the corals breed,
The footless, floating weed
Folds me and fouls me, strake on strake upcrawling.

I that was clean to run
My race against the sun—
Strength on the deep—am bawd to all disaster;
Whipped forth by night to meet
My sister's careless feet,
And with a kiss betray her to my master.

Man made me, and my will
Is to my maker still—
To him and his, our peoples at their pier:
Lifting in hope to spy
Trailed smoke along the sky,
Falling afraid lest any keel come near!

THE ANSWER

1892

A ROSE, in tatters on the garden path,
Cried out to God and murmured 'gainst His Wrath,
Because a sudden wind at twilight's hush
Had snapped her stem alone of all the bush.
And God, Who hears both sun-dried dust and sin,
Had pity, whispering to that luckless one.
'Sister, in that thou sayest We did not well—
What voices heardst thou when thy petals fell?'
And the Rose answered, 'In that evil hour
A voice said, "Father, wherefore falls the flower?
For lo, the very gossamers are still."
And a voice answered, "Son, by Allah's will!"

Then softly as a rain-mist on the sward,
Came to the Rose the Answer of the Lord:
'Sister, before We smote the Dark in twain,
Ere yet the Stars saw one another plain,
Time, Tide, and Space, We bound unto the task
That thou shouldst fall, and such an one should ask.
Whereat the withered flower, all content,
Died as they die whose days are innocent;
While he who questioned why the flower fell
Caught hold of God and saved his soul from Hell.

THE SONG OF THE BANJO

1894

YOU couldn't pack a Broadwood half a mile—
  You mustn't leave a fiddle in the damp—
You couldn't raft an organ up the Nile,
  And play it in an Equatorial swamp.
I travel with the cooking-pots and pails—
  I'm sandwiched 'tween the coffee and the pork—
And when the dusty column checks and tails,
  You should hear me spur the rearguard to a walk!

With my '*Pilly-willy-winky-winky-popp!*'
  [Oh, it's any tune that comes into my head!]
So I keep 'em moving forward till they drop;
  So I play 'em up to water and to bed.

In the silence of the camp before the fight,
  When it's good to make your will and say your prayer,
You can hear my *strumpty-tumpty* overnight,
  Explaining ten to one was always fair.
I'm the Prophet of the Utterly Absurd,
  Of the Patently Impossible and Vain—
And when the Thing that Couldn't has occurred,
  Give me time to change my leg and go again.

With my '*Tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tump!*'
  In the desert where the dung-fed camp-smoke curled.

There was never voice before us till I led our lonely chorus,
I—the war-drum of the White Man round the world!

By the bitter road the Younger Son must tread,
Ere he win to hearth and saddle of his own,—
'Mid the riot of the shearers at the shed,
In the silence of the herder's hut alone—
In the twilight, on a bucket upside down,
Hear me babble what the weakest won't confess—
I am Memory and Torment—I am Town!
I am all that ever went with evening dress!

With my '*Tunka-tunka-tunka-tunka-tunk!*'
[So the lights—the London Lights—grow near and plain!]
So I rowel 'em afresh towards the Devil and the Flesh,
Till I bring my broken rankers home again.

In desire of many marvels over sea,
Where the new-raised tropic city sweats and roars,
I have sailed with Young Ulysses from the quay
Till the anchor rumbled down on stranger shores.
He is blooded to the open and the sky,
He is taken in a snare that shall not fail,
He shall hear me singing strongly, till he die,
Like the shouting of a backstay in a gale.

With my '*Hya! Heeya! Heeya! Hullah! Haul!*'
[Oh, the green that thunders aft along the deck!]

Are you sick o' towns and men? You must sign
and sail again,
For it's 'Johnny Bowlegs, pack your kit and
trek!'

Through the gorge that gives the stars at noon-day
clear—
Up the pass that packs the scud beneath our
wheel—
Round the bluff that sinks her thousand fathom
sheer—
Down the valley with our guttering brakes asqueal:
Where the trestle groans and quivers in the snow,
Where the many-shedded levels loop and twine,
Hear me lead my reckless children from below
Till we sing the Song of Roland to the pine!

With my '*Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!*'
[Oh, the axe has cleared the mountain, croup
and crest!]
And we ride the iron stallions down to drink,
Through the cañons to the waters of the West!

And the tunes that mean so much to you alone—
Common tunes that make you choke and blow your
nose—
Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the
groan—
I can rip your very heart-strings out with those;
With the feasting, and the folly, and the fun—
And the lying, and the lusting, and the drink,

And the merry play that drops you, when you're done,
To the thoughts that burn like irons if you think.

With my '*Plunka-lunka-lunka-lunka-lunk!*'
Here's a trifle on account of pleasure past,
Ere the wit that made you win gives you eyes to see your sin
And—the heavier repentance at the last!

Let the organ moan her sorrow to the roof—
I have told the naked stars the Grief of Man!
Let the trumpets snare the foeman to the proof—
I have known Defeat, and mocked it as we ran!
My bray ye may not alter nor mistake
When I stand to jeer the fatted Soul of Things
But the Song of Lost Endeavour that I make,
Is it hidden in the twanging of the strings?

With my '*Ta-ra-rara-rara-ra-ra-rrrp!*'
[Is it naught to you that hear and pass me by?]
But the word—the word is mine, when the order moves the line
And the lean, locked ranks go roaring down to die!

The grandam of my grandam was the Lyre—
[Oh, the blue below the little fisher-huts!]
That the Stealer stooping beachward filled with fire,
Till she bore my iron head and ringing guts!
By the wisdom of the centuries I speak—
To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth—

I, the joy of life unquestioned—I, the Greek—
I, the everlasting Wonder-song of Youth!

With my '*Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!*'
[What d'ye lack, my noble masters? What d'ye lack?]
So I draw the world together link by link:
Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!

THE LINER SHE'S A LADY

1894

THE Liner she's a lady, an' she never looks nor 'eeds—
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e gives 'er all she needs;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats, that sail the wet seas roun',
They're just the same as you an' me a-plyin' up an' down!

Plyin' up an' down, Jenny, 'angin' round the Yard,
All the way by Fratton tram down to Portsmouth 'Ard;
Anythin' for business, an' we're growin' old—
Plyin' up an' down, Jenny, waitin' in the cold!

The Liner she's a lady by the paint upon 'er face,
An' if she meets an accident they count it sore disgrace.
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, and 'e's always 'andy by,
But, oh, the little cargo-boats, they've got to load or die!

The Liner she's a lady, and 'er route is cut an' dried;
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, an' 'e always keeps beside;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats that 'aven't any man,
They've got to do their business first, and make the most they can!

The Liner she's a lady, and if a war should come,
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, and 'e'd bid 'er stay
at home;
But, oh, the little cargo-boats that fill with every tide,
'E'd 'ave to up an' fight for them, for they are England's pride!

The Liner she's a lady, but if she wasn't made,
There still would be the cargo-boats for 'ome an' foreign trade.
The Man-o'-War's 'er 'usband, but if we wasn't 'ere,
'E wouldn't have to fight at all for 'ome an' friends so dear.

'Ome an' friends so dear, Jenny, 'angin' round the Yard,
All the way by Fratton tram down to Portsmouth 'Ard;
Anythin' for business, an' we're growin' old—
'Ome an' friends so dear, Jenny, waitin' in the cold!

MULHOLLAND'S CONTRACT

1894

THE fear was on the cattle, for the gale was on the sea,
An' the pens broke up on the lower deck an' let the creatures free—
An' the lights went out on the lower deck, an' no one near but me.

I had been singin' to them to keep 'em quiet there,
For the lower deck is the dangerousest, requirin' constant care,
An' give to me as the strongest man, though used to drink and swear.

I see my chance was certain of bein' horned or trod,
For the lower deck was packed with steers thicker 'n peas in a pod,
An' more pens broke at every roll—so I made a Contract with God.

An' by the terms of the Contract, as I have read the same,
If He got me to port alive I would exalt His Name,
An' praise His Holy Majesty till further orders came.

He saved me from the cattle an' He saved me from the sea,
For they found me 'tween two drownded ones where the roll had landed me—

An' a four-inch crack on top of my head, as crazy as could be.

But that were done by a stanchion, an' not by a bullock at all,
An' I lay still for seven weeks convalescing of the fall,
An' readin' the shiny Scripture texts in the Seaman's Hospital.

An' I spoke to God of our Contract, an' He says to my prayer:
'I never puts on My ministers no more than they can bear.
So back you go to the cattle-boats an' preach My Gospel there.

For human life is chancy at any kind of trade,
But most of all, as well you know, when the steers are mad-afraid;
So you go back to the cattle-boats an' preach 'em as I've said.

They must quit drinkin' an' swearin', they mustn't knife on a blow,
They must quit gamblin' their wages, an' you must preach it so;
For now those boats are more like Hell than anything else I know.'

I didn't want to do it, for I knew what I should get,
An' I wanted to preach Religion, handsome an' out of the wet;

But the Word of the Lord were laid on me, an' I done
what I was set.

I have been smit an' bruisèd, as warned would be the
case,
An' turned my cheek to the smiter exactly as Scrip-
ture says;
But, following that, I knocked him down an' led him
up to Grace.

An' we have preaching on Sundays whenever the sea
is calm,
An' I use no knife or pistol an' I never take no harm,
For the Lord abideth back of me to guide my fighting
arm.

An' I sign for four-pound-ten a month and save the
money clear,
An I am in charge of the lower deck, an' I never lose
a steer;
An' I believe in Almighty God an' I preach His Gospel
here.

The skippers say I'm crazy, but I can prove 'em wrong,
For I am in charge of the lower deck with all that doth
belong—
*Which they would not give to a lunatic, and the competition
so strong!*

ANCHOR SONG

1893

HEH! Walk her round. Heave, ah, heave her short again!
Over, snatch her over, there, and hold her on the pawl.
Loose all sail, and brace your yards aback and full—
Ready jib to pay her off and heave short all!

Well, ah, fare you well; we can stay no more with you, my love—
Down, set down your liquor and your girl from off your knee;
For the wind has come to say:
'You must take me while you may,
If you'd go to Mother Carey
(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),
Oh, we're bound to Mother Carey where she feeds her chicks at sea!'

Heh! Walk her round. Break, ah, break it out o' that!
Break our starboard-bower out, apeak, awash, and clear!
Port—port she casts, with her harbour-mud beneath her foot.
And that's the last o' bottom we shall see this year!

Well, ah, fare you well, for we've got to take her out again—

ANCHOR SONG

Take her out in ballast, riding light and cargo-free.
And it's time to clear and quit
When the hawser grips the bitt,
So we'll pay you with the foresheet and a promise from the sea!

Heh! Tally on. Aft and walk away with her!
Handsome to the cathead, now; Oh, tally on the fall!
Stop, seize and fish, and easy on the davit-guy.
Up, well up the fluke of her, and inboard haul!

Well, ah, fare you well, for the Channel wind's took hold of us,
Choking down our voices as we snatch the gaskets free.
And it's blowing up for night,
And she's dropping light on light,
And she's snorting and she's snatching for a breath of open sea!

Wheel, full and by; but she'll smell her road alone to-night.
Sick she is and harbour-sick—oh, sick to clear the land!
Roll down to Brest with the old Red Ensign over us—
Carry on and thrash her out with all she'll stand!

Well, ah, fare you well, and it's Ushant slams the door on us,

Whirling like a windmill through the dirty scud
to lee,
Till the last, last flicker goes
From the tumbling water-rows,
And we're off to Mother Carey
(Walk her down to Mother Carey!),
Oh, we're bound for Mother Carey where she
feeds her chicks at sea!

THE LOST LEGION

1895

THERE's a Legion that never was 'listed,
That carries no colours or crest,
But, split in a thousand detachments,
Is breaking the road for the rest.
Our fathers they left us their blessing—
They taught us, and groomed us, and crammed;
But we've shaken the Clubs and the Messes
To go and find out and be damned
(Dear boys!),
To go and get shot and be damned.

So some of us chivy the slaver,
And some of us cherish the black,
And some of us hunt on the Oil Coast,
And some on the Wallaby track:
And some of us drift to Sarawak,
And some of us drift up The Fly,
And some share our tucker with tigers,
And some with the gentle Masai
(Dear boys!),
Take tea with the giddy Masai.

We've painted The Islands vermilion,
We've pearled on half-shares in the Bay,
We've shouted on seven-ounce nuggets,
We've starved on a Seedeeboy's pay;
We've laughed at the world as we found it,—

Its women and cities and men—
From Sayyid Burgash in a tantrum
To the smoke-reddened eyes of Loben
(Dear boys!),
We've a little account with Loben.

The ends o' the Earth were our portion,
The Ocean at large was our share.
There was never a skirmish to windward
But the Leaderless Legion was there:
Yes, somehow and somewhere and always
We were first when the trouble began,
From a lottery-row in Manila,
To an I.D.B. race on the Pan
(Dear boys!),
With the Mounted Police on the Pan.

We preach in advance of the Army,
We skirmish ahead of the Church,
With never a gunboat to help us
When we're scuppered and left in the lurch.
But we know as the cartridges finish,
And we're filed on our last little shelves,
That the Legion that never was 'listed
Will send us as good as ourselves
(Good men!),
Five hundred as good as ourselves!

Then a health (we must drink it in whispers)
To our wholly unauthorized horde—
To the line of our dusty foreloopers,
The Gentlemen Rovers abroad—

Yes, a health to ourselves ere we scatter,
For the steamer won't wait for the train,
And the Legion that never was 'listed
Goes back into quarters again!
'Regards!
Goes back under canvas again.
Hurrah!
The swag and the billy again.
Here's how!
The trail and the packhorse again.
Salue!
The trek and the laager again!

THE SEA-WIFE

1893

THERE dwells a wife by the Northern Gate
  And a wealthy wife is she;
She breeds a breed of roving men
  And casts them over sea.

And some are drowned in deep water,
  And some in sight o' shore,
And word goes back to the weary wife
  And ever she sends more.

For since that wife had gate or gear,
  Or hearth or garth or bield,
She willed her sons to the white harvest,
  And that is a bitter yield.

She wills her sons to the wet ploughing,
  To ride the horse of tree;
And syne her sons come back again
  Far-spent from out the sea.

The good wife's sons come home again
  With little into their hands,
But the lore of men that have dealt with men
  In the new and naked lands;

But the faith of men that have brothered men
  By more than easy breath,

And the eyes of men that have read with men
  In the open books of Death.

Rich are they, rich in wonders seen,
  But poor in the goods of men;
So what they have got by the skin of their teeth
  They sell for their teeth again.

And whether they lose to the naked life
  Or win to their hearts' desire,
They tell it all to the weary wife
  That nods beside the fire.

Her hearth is wide to every wind
  That makes the white ash spin;
And tide and tide and 'tween the tides
  Her sons go out and in;

(Out with great mirth that do desire
  Hazard of trackless ways—
In with content to wait their watch
  And warm before the blaze);

And some return by failing light,
  And some in waking dream,
For she hears the heels of the dripping ghosts
  That ride the rough roof-beam.

Home, they come home from all the ports,
  The living and the dead;
The good wife's sons come home again
  For her blessing on their head!

HYMN BEFORE ACTION

1896

THE earth is full of anger,
The seas are dark with wrath,
The Nations in their harness
Go up against our path:
Ere yet we loose the legions—
Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid!

High lust and froward bearing,
Proud heart, rebellious brow—
Deaf ear and soul uncaring,
We seek Thy mercy now!
The sinner that forswore Thee,
The fool that passed Thee by,
Our times are known before Thee—
Lord, grant us strength to die!

For those who kneel beside us
At altars not Thine own,
Who lack the lights that guide us,
Lord, let their faith atone!
If wrong we did to call them,
By honour bound they came;
Let not Thy Wrath befall them,
But deal to us the blame.

HYMN BEFORE ACTION

From panic, pride, and terror,
  Revenge that knows no rein—
Light haste and lawless error,
  Protect us yet again.
Cloke Thou our undeserving,
  Make firm the shuddering breath,
In silence and unswerving
  To taste Thy lesser death!

Ah, Mary pierced with sorrow,
  Remember, reach and save
The soul that comes to-morrow
  Before the God that gave!
Since each was born of woman,
  For each at utter need—
True comrade and true foeman—
  Madonna, intercede!

E'en now their vanguard gathers,
  E'en now we face the fray—
As Thou didst help our fathers,
  Help Thou our host to-day.
Fulfilled of signs and wonders,
  In life, in death made clear—
Jehovah of the Thunders,
  Lord God of Battles, hear!

TO THE TRUE ROMANCE

1893

THY face is far from this our war,
Our call and counter-cry,
I shall not find Thee quick and kind,
Nor know Thee till I die.
Enough for me in dreams to see
And touch Thy garments' hem:
Thy feet have trod so near to God
I may not follow them!

Through wantonness if men profess
They weary of Thy parts,
E'en let them die at blasphemy
And perish with their arts;
But we that love, but we that prove
Thine excellence august,
While we adore, discover more
Thee perfect, wise, and just.

Since spoken word Man's Spirit stirred
Beyond his belly-need,
What is is Thine of fair design
In Thought and Craft and Deed.
Each stroke aright of toil and fight,
That was and that shall be,
And hope too high, wherefore we die,
Has birth and worth in Thee.

Who holds by Thee hath Heaven in fee
  To gild his dross thereby,
And knowledge sure that he endure
  A child until he die—
For to make plain that Man's disdain
  Is but new Beauty's birth—
For to possess in singleness
  The joy of all the earth.

As Thou didst teach all lovers speech,
  And Life all mystery,
So shalt Thou rule by every school
  Till life and longing die,
Who wast, or yet the Lights were set,
  A whisper in the Void,
Who shalt be sung through planets young
  When this is clean destroyed.

Beyond the bounds our staring rounds,
  Across the pressing dark,
The children wise of outer skies
  Look hitherward and mark
A light that shifts, a glare that drifts,
  Rekindling thus and thus—
Not all forlorn, for Thou hast borne
  Strange tales to them of us.

Time hath no tide but must abide
  The servant of Thy will;
Tide hath no time, for to Thy rhyme
  The ranging stars stand still—

Regent of spheres that lock our fears,
  Our hopes invisible,
Oh, 'twas certes at Thy decrees
  We fashioned Heaven and Hell!

Pure Wisdom hath no certain path
  That lacks Thy morning-eyne,
And Captains bold by Thee controlled
  Most like to Gods design.
Thou art the Voice to kingly boys
  To lift them through the fight,
And Comfortress of Unsuccess
  To give the Dead good-night.

A veil to draw 'twixt God His Law
  And Man's infirmity,
A shadow kind to dumb and blind
  The shambles where we die;
A rule to trick th' arithmetic,
  Too base, of leaguing odds—
The spur of trust, the curb of lust,
  Thou handmaid of the Gods!

O Charity, all patiently
  Abiding wrack and scaith!
O Faith, that meets ten thousand cheats
  Yet drops no jot of faith!
Devil and brute Thou dost transmute
  To higher, lordlier show,
Who art in sooth that lovely Truth
  The careless angels know!

Thy face is far from this our war,
Our call and counter-cry,
I may not find Thee quick and kind,
Nor know Thee till I die.

Yet may I look with heart unshook
On blow brought home or missed—
Yet may I hear with equal ear
The clarions down the List;
Yet set my lance above mischance
And ride the barriere—
Oh, hit or miss, how little 'tis,
My Lady is not there!

THE FLOWERS

1895

'To our private taste, there is always something a little exotic, almost artificial, in songs which, under an English aspect and dress, are yet so manifestly the product of other skies. They affect us like translations; the very fauna and flora are alien, remote; the dog's-tooth violet is but an ill substitute for the rathe primrose, nor can we ever believe that the wood-robin sings as sweetly in April as the English thrush.'—*The Athenaeum.*

Buy my English posies!
Kent and Surrey may—
Violets of the Undercliff
Wet with Channel spray;
Cowslips from a Devon combe—
Midland furze afire—
Buy my English posies
And I'll sell your heart's desire!

Buy my English posies!
You that scorn the may,
Won't you greet a friend from home
Half the world away?
Green against the draggled drift,
Faint and frail and first—
Buy my Northern blood-root
And I'll know where you were nursed!

Robin down the logging-road whistles, 'Come to me!'
Spring has found the maple-grove, the sap is running free.
All the winds of Canada call the ploughing-rain.
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Here's to match your need—
Buy a tuft of royal heath,
Buy a bunch of weed
White as sand of Muizenberg
Spun before the gale—
Buy my heath and lilies
And I'll tell you whence you hail!

Under hot Constantia broad the vineyards lie—
Throned and thorned the aching berg props the speckless sky—
Slow below the Wynberg firs trails the tilted wain—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
You that will not turn—
Buy my hot-wood clematis,
Buy a frond o' fern
Gathered where the Erskine leaps
Down the road to Lorne—
Buy my Christmas creeper
And I'll say where you were born!

West away from Melbourne dust holidays begin—
They that mock at Paradise woo at Cora Lynn—

Through the great South Otway gums sings the great South Main—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Here's your choice unsold!
Buy a blood-red myrtle-bloom,
Buy the *kowhai's* gold
Flung for gift on Taupo's face,
Sign that spring is come—
Buy my clinging myrtle
And I'll give you back your home!

Broom behind the Windy Town; pollen of the pine—
Bell-bird in the leafy deep where the *ratas* twine—
Fern above the saddle-bow, flax upon the plain—
Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love again!

Buy my English posies!
Ye that have your own
Buy them for a brother's sake
Overseas, alone!
Weed ye trample underfoot
Floods his heart abrim—
Bird ye never heeded,
Oh, she calls his dead to him!

Far and far our homes are set round the Seven Seas,
Woe for us if we forget, we who hold by these!
Unto each his mother-beach, bloom and bird and land—
Masters of the Seven Seas, oh, love and understand!

THE LAST RHYME OF TRUE THOMAS

1893

THE King has called for priest and cup,
  The King has taken spur and blade
To dub True Thomas a belted knight,
  And all for the sake of the songs he made

They have sought him high, they have sought him low,
  They have sought him over down and lea.
They have found him by the milk-white thorn
  That guards the Gates of Faerie.

'Twas bent beneath and blue above:
  Their eyes were held that they might not see
The kine that grazed beneath the knowes,
  Oh, they were the Queens of Faerie!

'Now cease your song,' the King he said,
  'Oh, cease your song and get you dight
To vow your vow and watch your arms,
  For I will dub you a belted knight.

For I will give you a horse o' pride,
  Wi' blazon and spur and page and squire;
Wi' keep and tail and seizin and law,
  And land to hold at your desire.'

True Thomas smiled above his harp,
And turned his face to the naked sky,
Where, blown before the wastrel wind,
The thistledown she floated by.

'I ha' vowed my vow in another place,
And bitter oath it was on me,
I ha' watched my arms the lee-long night,
Where five-score fighting-men would flee.

My lance is tipped o' the hammered flame,
My shield is beaten o' moonlight cold;
And I won my spurs in the Middle World,
A thousand fathom beneath the mould.

And what should I make wi' a horse o' pride,
And what should I make wi' a sword so brown,
But spill the rings of the Gentle Folk
And flyte my kin in the Fairy Town?

And what should I make wi' blazon and belt,
Wi' keep and tail and seizin and fee,
And what should I do wi' page and squire
That am a King in my own countrie?

For I send east and I send west,
And I send far as my will may flee,
By dawn and dusk and the drinking rain,
And syne my Sendings return to me.

They come wi' news of the groanin' earth,
They come wi' news of the roarin' sea,
Wi' word of Spirit and Ghost and Flesh,
And man, that's mazed among the three.'

The King he bit his nether lip,
And smote his hand upon his knee:
'By the faith of my soul, True Thomas,' he said,
'Ye waste no wit in courtesie!

As I desire, unto my pride,
Can I make Earls by three and three,
To run before and ride behind
And serve the sons o' my body.'

'And what care I for your row-foot Earls,
Or all the sons o' your body?
Before they win to the Pride o' Name,
I trow they all ask leave o' me.

For I make Honour wi' muckle mouth,
As I make Shame wi' mincing feet,
To sing wi' the priests at the market-cross,
Or run wi' the dogs in the naked street.

And some they give me the good red gold,
And some they give me the white monèy,
And some they give me a clout o' meal,
For they be people of low degree.

And the song I sing for the counted gold
The same I sing for the white monèy,
But best I sing for the clout o' meal
That simple people given me.'

The King cast down a silver groat,
A silver groat o' Scots monèy,
'If I come wi' a poor man's dole,' he said,
'True Thomas, will ye harp to me?'

'Whenas I harp to the children small,
They press me close on either hand.
And who are you,' True Thomas said,
'That you should ride while they must stand?

Light down, light down from your horse o' pride,
I trow ye talk too loud and hie,
And I will make you a triple word,
And syne, if ye dare, ye shall 'noble me.'

He has lighted down from his horse o' pride,
And set his back against a stone.
'Now guard you well,' True Thomas said,
Ere I rax your heart from your breast-bone!'

True Thomas played upon his harp,
The fairy harp that couldna lee,
And the first least word the proud King heard,
It harpit the salt tear out o' his e'e.

'Oh, I see the love that I lost long syne,
I touch the hope that I may not see,
And all that I did of hidden shame,
Like little snakes they hiss at me.

The sun is lost at noon—at noon!
The dread of doom has grippit me.
True Thomas, hide me under your cloak,
God wot, I'm little fit to dee!'

'Twas bent beneath and blue above—
'Twas open field and running flood—
Where, hot on heath and dyke and wall,
The high sun warmed the adder's brood.

'Lie down, lie down,' True Thomas said.
'The God shall judge when all is done.
But I will bring you a better word
And lift the cloud that I laid on.'

True Thomas played upon his harp,
That birled and brattled to his hand,
And the next least word True Thomas made,
It garred the King take horse and brand.

'Oh, I hear the tread o' the fighting-men,
I see the sun on splent and spear.
I mark the arrow outen the fern
That flies so low and sings so clear!

Advance my standards to that war,
And bid my good knights prick and ride;
The gled shall watch as fierce a fight
As e'er was fought on the Border-side!'

'Twas bent beneath and blue above,
'Twas nodding grass and naked sky,
Where, ringing up the wastrel wind,
The eyass stooped upon the pye.

True Thomas sighed above his harp,
And turned the song on the midmost string;
And the last least word True Thomas made,
He harpit his dead youth back to the King.

'Now I am prince, and I do well
To love my love withouten fear;
To walk with man in fellowship,
And breathe my horse behind the deer.

My hounds they bay unto the death,
  The buck has couched beyond the burn,
My love she waits at her window
  To wash my hands when I return.

For that I live am I content
  (Oh! I have seen my true-love's eyes)
To stand with Adam in Eden-glade,
  And run in the woods o' Paradise!'

'Twas naked sky and nodding grass,
  'Twas running flood and wastrel wind,
Where, checked against the open pass,
  The red deer turned to wait the hind.

True Thomas laid his harp away,
  And louted low at the saddle-side;
He has taken stirrup and hauden rein,
  And set the King on his horse o' pride.

'Sleep ye or wake,' True Thomas said,
  'That sit so still, that muse so long?
Sleep ye or wake?—till the Latter Sleep
  I trow ye'll not forget my song.

I ha' harpit a Shadow out o' the sun
  To stand before your face and cry;
I ha' armed the earth beneath your heel,
  And over your head I ha' dusked the sky.

I ha' harpit ye up to the Throne o' God,
  I ha' harpit your midmost soul in three.
I ha' harpit ye down to the Hinges o' Hell,
  And—ye—would—make—a Knight o' me!'

IN THE NEOLITHIC AGE

1895

In the Neolithic Age savage warfare did I wage
For food and fame and woolly horses' pelt.
I was singer to my clan in that dim, red Dawn of Man,
And I sang of all we fought and feared and felt.

Yea, I sang as now I sing, when the Prehistoric spring
Made the piled Biscayan ice-pack split and shove;
And the troll and gnome and dwerg, and the Gods of Cliff and Berg
Were about me and beneath me and above.

But a rival, of Solutré, told the tribe my style was *outré*—
'Neath a tomahawk, of diorite, he fell.
And I left my views on Art, barbed and tanged, below the heart
Of a mammothistic etcher at Grenelle.

Then I stripped them, scalp from skull, and my hunting-dogs fed full,
And their teeth I threaded neatly on a thong;
And I wiped my mouth and said, 'It is well that they are dead,
For I know my work is right and theirs was wrong.'

But my Totem saw the shame; from his ridgepole-shrine he came,
And he told me in a vision of the night:—
'There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And every single one of them is right!'

. . . . . .

Then the silence closed upon me till They put new clothing on me
Of whiter, weaker flesh and bone more frail;
And I stepped beneath Time's finger, once again a tribal singer,
And a minor poet certified by Traill!

Still they skirmish to and fro, men my messmates on the snow,
When we headed off the aurochs turn for turn;
When the rich Allobrogenses never kept amanuenses,
And our only plots were piled in lakes at Berne.

Still a cultured Christian age sees us scuffle, squeak, and rage,
Still we pinch and slap and jabber, scratch and dirk;
Still we let our business slide—as we dropped the half-dressed hide—
To show a fellow-savage how to work.

Still the world is wondrous large—seven seas from marge to marge—
And it holds a vast of various kinds of man;

And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandhu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban.

Here's my wisdom for your use, as I learned it when the moose
And the reindeer roamed where Paris roars tonight:—
'*There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,*
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right!'

THE STORY OF UNG

1894

ONCE, on a glittering ice-field, ages and ages ago,
Ung, a maker of pictures, fashioned an image of snow.
Fashioned the form of a tribesman—gaily he whistled and sung,
Working the snow with his fingers. *Read ye the Story of Ung!*

Pleased was his Tribe with that image—came in their hundreds to scan,
Handled it, smelt it, and grunted: 'Verily, this is a man!
Thus do we carry our lances—thus is a war-belt slung.
Lo! it is even as we are. Glory and honour to Ung!'

Later he pictured an aurochs—later he pictured a bear—
Pictured the sabre-tooth tiger dragging a man to his lair—
Pictured the mountainous mammoth, hairy, abhorrent, alone—
Out of the love that he bore them, scriving them clearly on bone.

Swift came his Tribe to behold them, peering and pushing and still—
Men of the berg-battered beaches, men of the boulder-hatched hill—

Hunters and fishers and trappers, presently whispering low:
'Yea, they are like—and it may be. But how does the Picture-man know?

Ung—hath he slept with the Aurochs—watched where the Mastodon roam?
Spoke from the ice with the Bow-head—followed the Sabre-tooth home?
Nay! These are toys of his fancy! If he have cheated us so,
How is there truth in his image—the man that he fashioned of snow?'

Wroth was that maker of pictures—hotly he answered the call:
'Hunters and fishers and trappers, children and fools are ye all!
Look at the beasts when ye hunt them!' Swift from the tumult he broke,
Ran to the cave of his father and told him the shame that they spoke.

And the father of Ung gave answer, that was old and wise in the craft,
Maker of pictures aforetime, he leaned on his lance and laughed:
'If they could see as thou seest they would do what thou hast done,
And each man would make him a picture, and—what would become of my son?

There would be no pelts of the reindeer, flung down
at thy cave for a gift,
Nor dole of the oily timber that comes on the Baltic
drift;
No store of well-drilled needles, nor ouches of amber
pale;
No new-cut tongues of the bison, nor meat of the
stranded whale.

Thou hast not toiled at the fishing when the sodden
trammels freeze,
Nor worked the war-boats outward through the rush
of the rock-staked seas;
Yet they bring thee fish and plunder—full meal and
an easy bed—
And all for the sake of thy pictures.' And Ung held
down his head.

Thou hast not stood to the Aurochs when the red
snow reeks of the fight;
Men have no time at the houghing to count his curls
aright.
And the heart of the hairy Mammoth, thou sayest,
they do not see,
Yet they save it whole from the beaches and broil the
best for thee.

And now do they press to thy pictures, with opened
mouth and eye,
And a little gift in the doorway, and the praise no gift
can buy:

But—sure they have doubted thy pictures, and that is
a grievous stain—
Son that can see so clearly, return them their gifts
again!'

And Ung looked down at his deerskins—their broad
shell-tasselled bands—
And Ung drew forward his mittens and looked at his
naked hands;
And he gloved himself and departed, and he heard his
father, behind:
'Son that can see so clearly, rejoice that thy Tribe is
blind!'

Straight on the glittering ice-field, by the caves of the
lost Dordogne,
Ung, a maker of pictures, fell to his scriving on bone—
Even to mammoth editions. Gaily he whistled and
sung,
Blessing his Tribe for their blindness. *Heed ye the Story
of Ung!*

THE THREE-DECKER

1894

'The three-volume novel is extinct.'

FULL thirty foot she towered from waterline to rail.
It took a watch to steer her, and a week to shorten sail;
But, 'spite all modern notions, I've found her first and best—
The only certain packet for the Islands of the Blest.

Fair held the breeze behind us—'twas warm with lover's prayers.
We'd stolen wills for ballast and a crew of missing heirs.
They shipped as Able Bastards till the Wicked Nurse confessed,
And they worked the old three-decker to the Islands of the Blest.

By ways no gaze could follow, a course unspoiled of Cook,
Per Fancy, fleetest in man, our titled berths we took
With maids of matchless beauty and parentage unguessed,
And a Church of England parson for the Islands of the Blest.

We asked no social questions—we pumped no hidden shame—

We never talked obstetrics when the Little Stranger came:
We left the Lord in Heaven, we left the fiends in Hell.
We weren't exactly Yussufs, but—Zuleika didn't tell.

No moral doubt assailed us, so when the port we neared,
The villain had his flogging at the gangway, and we cheered.
'Twas fiddle in the foc'sle—'twas garlands on the mast,
For every one got married, and I went ashore at last.

I left 'em all in couples a-kissing on the decks.
I left the lovers loving and the parents signing cheques.
In endless English comfort, by county-folk caressed,
I left the old three-decker at the Islands of the Blest! . . .

That route is barred to steamers: you'll never lift again
Our purple-painted headlands or the lordly keeps of Spain.
They're just beyond your skyline, however far you cruise
In a ram-you-damn-you liner with a brace of bucking screws.

Swing round your aching searchlight—'twill show no haven's peace.
Ay, blow your shrieking sirens at the deaf, grey-bearded seas!

Boom out the dripping oil-bags to skin the deep's unrest—
And you aren't one knot the nearer to the Islands of the Blest!

But when you're threshing, crippled, with broken bridge and rail,
At a drogue of dead convictions to hold you head to gale,
Calm as the Flying Dutchman, from truck to taffrail dressed,
You'll see the old three-decker for the Islands of the Blest.

You'll see her tiering canvas in sheeted silver spread;
You'll hear the long-drawn thunder 'neath her leaping figure-head;
While far, so far above you, her tall poop-lanterns shine
Unvexed by wind or weather like the candles round a shrine.

Hull down—hull down and under—she dwindles to a speck,
With noise of pleasant music and dancing on her deck.
All's well—all's well aboard her—she's left you far behind,
With a scent of old-world roses through the fog that ties you blind.

Her crew are babes or madmen? Her port is all to make?

You're manned by Truth and Science, and you steam
for steaming's sake?
Well, tinker up your engines—you know your busi-
ness best—
She's taking tired people to the Islands of the Blest!

AN AMERICAN

1894

The American Spirit speaks:

If the Led Striker call it a strike,
Or the papers call it a war,
They know not much what I am like,
Nor what he is, my Avatar.

Through many roads, by me possessed,
He shambles forth in cosmic guise;
He is the Jester and the Jest,
And he the Text himself applies.

The Celt is in his heart and hand,
The Gaul is in his brain and nerve;
Where, cosmopolitanly planned,
He guards the Redskin's dry reserve.

His easy unswept hearth he lends
From Labrador to Guadeloupe;
Till, elbowed out by sloven friends,
He camps, at sufferance, on the stoop.

Calm-eyed he scoffs at Sword and Crown,
Or, panic-blinded, stabs and slays;
Blatant he bids the world bow down,
Or cringing begs a crust of praise;

Or, sombre-drunk, at mine and mart,
He dubs his dreary brethren Kings.
His hands are black with blood—his heart
Leaps, as a babe's, at little things.

But, through the shift of mood and mood,
Mine ancient humour saves him whole—
The cynic devil in his blood
That bids him mock his hurrying soul;

That bids him flout the Law he makes,
That bids him make the Law he flouts,
Till, dazed by many doubts, he wakes
The drumming guns that—have no doubts;

That checks him foolish-hot and fond,
That chuckles through his deepest ire,
That gilds the slough of his despond
But dims the goal of his desire;

Inopportune, shrill-accented,
The acrid Asiatic mirth
That leaves him, careless 'mid his dead,
The scandal of the elder earth.

How shall he clear himself, how reach
Your bar or weighed defence prefer—
A brother hedged with alien speech
And lacking all interpreter?

Which knowledge vexes him a space;
But, while Reproof around him rings,

He turns a keen untroubled face
  Home, to the instant need of things.

Enslaved, illogical, elate,
  He greets th' embarrassed Gods, nor fears
To shake the iron hand of Fate
  Or match with Destiny for beers.

Lo, imperturbable he rules,
Unkempt, disreputable, vast—
And, in the teeth of all the schools,
  I—I shall save him at the last!

THE *MARY GLOSTER*

1894

I've paid for your sickest fancies; I've humoured your
crackedest whim—
Dick, it's your daddy, dying; you've got to listen to
him!
Good for a fortnight, am I? The doctor told you? He
lied.
I shall go under by morning, and—— Put that nurse
outside.
'Never seen death yet, Dickie? Well, now is your time
to learn,
And you'll wish you held my record before it comes
to your turn.
Not counting the Line and the Foundry, the Yards and
the village, too,
I've made myself and a million; but I'm damned if I
made you.
Master at two-and-twenty, and married at twenty-
three—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll, and forty freighters
at sea!
Fifty years between 'em, and every year of it fight,
And now I'm Sir Anthony Gloster, dying, a baronite:
For I lunched with His Royal 'Ighness—what was it
the papers had?
'Not least of our merchant-princes.' Dickie, that's me,
your dad!
I didn't begin with askings. *I* took my job and I stuck;

And I took the chances they wouldn't, an' now they're calling it luck.
Lord, what boats I've handled—rotten and leaky and old—
Ran 'em, or—opened the bilge-cock, precisely as I was told.
Grub that 'ud bind you crazy, and crews that 'ud turn you grey,
And a big fat lump of insurance to cover the risk on the way.
The others they dursn't do it; they said they valued their life
(They've served me since as skippers). *I* went, and I took my wife.
Over the world I drove 'em, married at twenty-three,
And your mother saving the money and making a man of me.
I was content to be master, but she said there was better behind;
She took the chances I wouldn't, and I followed your mother blind.
She egged me to borrow the money, an' she helped me to clear the loan,
When we bought half-shares in a cheap 'un and hoisted a flag of our own.
Patching and coaling on credit, and living the Lord knew how,
We started the Red Ox freighters—we've eight-and-thirty now.
And those were the days of clippers, and the freights were clipper-freights,

And we knew we were making our fortune, but she died in Macassar Straits—
By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank—
And we dropped her in fourteen fathom: I pricked it off where she sank.
Owners we were, full owners, and the boat was christened for her,
And she died in the *Mary Gloster*. My heart, how young we were!
So I went on a spree round Java and well-nigh ran her ashore,
But your mother came and warned me and I wouldn't liquor no more:
Strict I stuck to my business, afraid to stop or I'd think,
Saving the money (she warned me), and letting the other men drink.
And I met M'Cullough in London (I'd saved five 'undred then),
And 'tween us we started the Foundry—three forges and twenty men.
Cheap repairs for the cheap 'uns. It paid, and the business grew;
For I bought me a steam-lathe patent, and that was a gold-mine too.
'Cheaper to build 'em than buy 'em,' *I* said, but M'Cullough he shied,
And we wasted a year in talking before we moved to the Clyde.
And the Lines were all beginning, and we all of us started fair,

Building our engines like houses and staying the boilers square.
But M'Cullough 'e wanted cabins with marble and maple and all,
And Brussels an' Utrecht velvet, and baths and a Social Hall,
And pipes for closets all over, and cutting the frames too light,
But M'Cullough he died in the 'Sixties, and—— Well, I'm dying to-night. . . .
I knew—*I* knew what was coming, when we bid on the *Byfleet's* keel—
They piddled and piffled with iron. I'd given my orders for steel!
Steel and the first expansions. It paid, I tell you, it paid,
When we came with our nine-knot freighters and collared the long-run trade!
And they asked me how I did it, and I gave 'em the Scripture text,
'You keep your light so shining a little in front o' the next!'
They copied all they could follow, but they couldn't copy my mind,
And I left 'em sweating and stealing a year and a half behind.
Then came the armour-contracts, but that was M'Cullough's side;
He was always best in the Foundry, but better, perhaps, he died.
I went through his private papers; the notes was plainer than print;
And I'm no fool to finish if a man'll give me a hint.

(I remember his widow was angry.) So I saw what his drawings meant,
And I started the six-inch rollers, and it paid me sixty per cent.
Sixty per cent *with* failures, and more than twice we could do,
And a quarter-million to credit, and I saved it all for you!
I thought—it doesn't matter—you seemed to favour your ma,
But you're nearer forty than thirty, and I know the kind you are.
Harrer an' Trinity College! I ought to ha' sent you to sea—
But I stood you an education, an' what have you done for me?
The things I knew was proper you wouldn't thank me to give,
And the things I knew was rotten you said was the way to live.
For you muddled with books and pictures, an' china an' etchin's an' fans,
And your rooms at college was beastly—more like a whore's than a man's;
Till you married that thin-flanked woman, as white and as stale as a bone,
An' she gave you your social nonsense; but where's that kid o' your own?
I've seen your carriages blocking the half o' the Cromwell Road,
But never the doctor's brougham to help the missus unload.

(So there isn't even a grandchild, an' the Gloster family's done.)
Not like your mother, she isn't. *She* carried her freight each run.
But they died, the pore little beggars! At sea she had 'em—they died.
Only you, an' you stood it. You haven't stood much beside.
Weak, a liar, and idle, and mean as a collier's whelp
Nosing for scraps in the galley. No help—my son was no help!
So he gets three 'undred thousand, in trust and the interest paid.
I wouldn't give it you, Dickie—you see, I made it in trade.
You're saved from soiling your fingers, and if you have no child,
It all comes back to the business. 'Gad, won't your wife be wild!
'Calls and calls in her carriage, her 'andkerchief up to 'er eye:
'Daddy! dear daddy's dyin'!' and doing her best to cry.
Grateful? Oh, yes, I'm grateful, but keep her away from here.
Your mother 'ud never ha' stood 'er, and, anyhow, women are queer. . . .
There's women will say I've married a second time. Not quite!
But give pore Aggie a hundred, and tell her your lawyers'll fight.
She was the best o' the boiling—you'll meet her before it ends.

I'm in for a row with the mother—I'll leave you settle
my friends.
For a man he must go with a woman, which women
don't understand—
Or the sort that say they can see it, they aren't the
marrying brand.
But I wanted to speak o' your mother that's Lady
Gloster still—
I'm going to up and see her, without its hurting the
will.
Here! Take your hand off the bell-pull. Five thou-
sand's waiting for you,
If you'll only listen a minute, and do as I bid you do.
They'll try to prove me crazy, and, if you bungle, they
can;
And I've only you to trust to! (O God, why ain't it
a man?)
There's some waste money on marbles, the same as
M'Cullough tried—
Marbles and mausoleums—but I call that sinful pride.
There's some ship bodies for burial—we've carried 'em,
soldered and packed;
Down in their wills they wrote it, and nobody called
them cracked.
But me—I've too much money, and people might . . .
All my fault:
It come o' hoping for grandsons and buyin' that Wokin'
vault. . . .
I'm sick o' the 'ole dam' business; I'm going back where
I came.
Dick, you're the son o' my body, and you'll take charge
o' the same!

I want to lie by your mother, ten thousand mile away,
And they'll want to send me to Wokin'; and that's where you'll earn your pay.
I've thought it out on the quiet, the same as it ought to be done—
Quiet, and decent, and proper—an' here's your orders, my son.
You know the Line? You don't, though. You write to the Board, and tell
Your father's death has upset you an' you're goin' to cruise for a spell,
An' you'd like the *Mary Gloster*—I've held her ready for this—
They'll put her in working order and you'll take her out as she is.
Yes, it was money idle when I patched her and laid her aside
(Thank God, I can pay for my fancies!)—the boat where your mother died,
By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank,
We dropped her—I think I told you—and I pricked it off where she sank—
['Tiny she looked on the grating—that oily, treacly sea—]
'Hundred and Eighteen East, remember, and South just Three.
Easy bearings to carry—Three South—Three to the dot;
But I gave McAndrew a copy in case of dying—or not.

And so you'll write to McAndrew, he's Chief of the Maori Line;
They'll give him leave, if you ask 'em and say it's business o' mine.
I built three boats for the Maoris, an' very well pleased they were,
An' I've known Mac since the 'Fifties, and Mac knew me—and her.
After the first stroke warned me I sent him the money to keep
Against the time you'd claim it, committin' your dad to the deep;
For you are the son o' my body, and Mac was my oldest friend,
I've never asked 'im to dinner, but he'll see it out to the end.
Stiff-necked Glasgow beggar! I've heard he's prayed for my soul,
But he couldn't lie if you paid him, and he'd starve before he stole!
He'll take the *Mary* in ballast—you'll find her a lively ship;
And you'll take Sir Anthony Gloster, that goes on 'is wedding-trip,
Lashed in our old deck-cabin with all three portholes wide,
The kick o' the screw beneath him and the round blue seas outside!
Sir Anthony Gloster's carriage—our 'ouse-flag flyin' free—
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll and forty freighters at sea!

He made himself and a million, but this world is a fleetin' show,
And he'll go to the wife of 'is bosom the same as he ought to go—
By the heel of the Paternosters—there isn't a chance to mistake—
And Mac'll pay you the money as soon as the bubbles break!
Five thousand for six weeks' cruising, the staunchest freighter afloat,
And Mac he'll give you your bonus the minute I'm out o' the boat!
He'll take you round to Macassar, and you'll come back alone;
He knows what I want o' the *Mary*. . . . I'll do what I please with my own.
Your mother 'ud call it wasteful, but I've seven-and-thirty more;
I'll come in my private carriage and bid it wait at the door. . . .
For my son 'e was never a credit: 'e muddled with books and art,
And 'e lived on Sir Anthony's money and 'e broke Sir Anthony's heart.
There isn't even a grandchild, and the Gloster family's done——
The only one you left me—O mother, the only one!
Harrer and Trinity College—me slavin' early an' late—
An' he thinks I'm dying crazy, and you're in Macassar Strait!
Flesh o' my flesh, my dearie, for ever an' ever amen,

That first stroke come for a warning. I ought to ha gone to you then.
But—cheap repairs for a cheap 'un—the doctors said I'd do:
Mary, why didn't *you* warn me? I've allus heeded to you,
Excep'—I know—about women; but you are a spirit now;
An', wife, they was only women, and I was a man. That's how.
An' a man 'e must go with a woman, as you *could* not understand;
But I never talked 'em secrets. I paid 'em out o' hand.
Thank God, I can pay for my fancies! Now what's five thousand to me,
For a berth off the Paternosters in the haven where I would be?
I believe in the Resurrection, if I read my Bible plain,
But I wouldn't trust 'em at Wokin'; we're safer at sea again.
For the heart it shall go with the treasure—go down to the sea in ships.
I'm sick of the hired women. I'll kiss my girl on her lips!
I'll be content with my fountain. I'll drink from my own well,
And the wife of my youth shall charm me—an' the rest can go to Hell.
(Dickie, *he* will, that's certain.) I'll lie in our standin'-bed,
An' Mac'll take her in ballast—an' she trims best by the head. . . .

Down by the head an' sinkin', her fires are drawn and cold,
And the water's splashin' hollow on the skin of the empty hold—
Churning an' choking and chuckling, quiet and scummy and dark—
Full to her lower hatches and risin' steady. Hark!
That was the after-bulkhead. . . . She's flooded from stem to stern. . . .
'Never seen death yet, Dickie? . . . Well, now is your time to learn!

SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

1896

SPEAKIN' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all—
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—
The different ways that different things are done
An' men an' women lovin' in this world;
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit—no, it aren't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done?
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world—
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labour all
'Is life on one same shift—life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset it all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,
An' met my mate—the wind that tramps the world!

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read an' care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So write, before I die, "'E liked it all!'

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

1893–1896

WHEN 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
'E'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;
An' what 'e thought 'e might require,
'E went an' took—the same as me!

The market-girls an' fishermen,
The shepherds an' the sailors, too,
They 'eard old songs turn up again,
But kep' it quiet—same as you!

They knew 'e stole; 'e knew they knowed.
They didn't tell, nor make a fuss,
But winked at 'Omer down the road,
An' 'e winked back—the same as us!

'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

I'M 'ere in a ticky ulster an' a broken billycock 'at,
A-layin' on to the Sergeant I don't know a gun from a bat;
My shirt's doin' duty for jacket, my sock's stickin' out o' my boots,
An' I'm learnin' the damned old goose-step along o' the new recruits!

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
Don't look so 'ard, for I 'aven't no card,
I'm back to the Army again!

I done my six years' service. 'Er Majesty sez: 'Good day—
You'll please to come when you're rung for, an' 'ere's your 'ole back-pay;
An' fourpence a day for baccy—an' bloomin' gen'rous too;
An' now you can make your fortune—the same as your orf'cers do.'

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
'Ow did I learn to do right-about-turn?
I'm back to the Army again!

A man o' four-an'-twenty that 'asn't learned of a trade—
Beside 'Reserve' agin' him—'e'd better be never made.

I tried my luck for a quarter, an' that was enough for me,
An' I thought of 'Er Majesty's barricks, an' I thought I'd go an' see.

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
'Tisn't my fault if I dress when I 'alt—
I'm back to the Army again!

The Sergeant arst no questions, but 'e winked the other eye,
'E sez to me, "'Shun!' an' I shunted, the same as in days gone by;
For 'e saw the set o' my shoulders, an' I couldn't 'elp 'oldin' straight
When me an' the other rookies come under the barrick-gate.

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
'Oo would ha' thought I could carry an' port?[1]
I'm back to the Army again!

I took my bath, an' I wallered—for, Gawd, I needed it so!
I smelt the smell o' the barricks, I 'eard the bugles go.
I 'eard the feet on the gravel—the feet o' the men what drill—
An' I sez to my flutterin' 'eart-strings, I sez to 'em, 'Peace, be still!'

[1] Carry and port his rifle.

'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
'Oo said I knew when the troopship was due?
I'm back to the Army again!

I carried my slops to the tailor; I sez to 'im, 'None o' your lip!
You tight 'em over the shoulders, an' loose 'em over the 'ip,
For the set o' the tunic's 'orrid.' An' 'e sez to me, 'Strike me dead,
But I thought you was used to the business!' an' so 'e done what I said.

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
Rather too free with my fancies? Wot—me?
I'm back to the Army again!

Next week I'll 'ave 'em fitted; I'll buy me a swagger-cane;
They'll let me free o' the barricks to walk on the Hoe again,
In the name o' William Parsons, that used to be Edward Clay,
An'—any pore beggar that wants it can draw my four-pence a day!

Back to the Army again, Sergeant,
Back to the Army again.
Out o' the cold an' the rain, Sergeant,
Out o' the cold an' the rain.

'Oo's there?
A man that's too good to be lost you,
A man that is 'andled an' made—
A man that will pay what 'e cost you
In learnin' the others their trade—parade!
You're droppin' the pick o' the Army
Because you don't 'elp 'em remain,
But drives 'em to cheat to get out o' the street
An' back to the Army again!

'BIRDS OF PREY' MARCH

(TROOPS FOR FOREIGN SERVICE)

MARCH! The mud is cakin' good about our trousies
Front!—eyes front, an' watch the Colour-casin's drip.
Front! The faces of the women in the 'ouses
Ain't the kind o' things to take aboard the ship.

Cheer! An' we'll never march to victory.
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!
The Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

Wheel! Oh, keep your touch; we're goin' round a corner.
Time!—mark time, an' let the men be'ind us close.
Lord! the transport's full, an' 'alf our lot not on 'er—
Cheer, Oh, cheer! We're going off where no one knows.

March! The Devil's none so black as 'e is painted!
Cheer! We'll 'ave some fun before we're put away.
'Alt, an' 'and 'er out—a woman's gone an' fainted!
Cheer! Get on!—Gawd 'elp the married men to-day!

Hoi! Come up, you 'ungry beggars, to yer sorrow.
('Ear them say they want their tea, an' want it quick!)

You won't have no mind for slingers,[1] not to-morrow—
No; you'll put the 'tween-decks stove out, bein' sick!

'Alt! The married kit 'as all to go before us!
'Course it's blocked the bloomin' gangway up again!
Cheer, Oh, cheer the 'Orse Guards watchin' tender o'er us,
Keepin' us since eight this mornin' in the rain!

Stuck in 'eavy marchin'-order, sopped and wringin'—
Sick, before our time to watch 'er 'eave an' fall,
'Ere's your 'appy 'ome at last, an' stop your singin'.
'Alt! Fall in along the troop-deck! Silence all!

Cheer! For we'll never live to see no bloomin' victory!
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!
(One cheer more!)
The jackal an' the kite
'Ave an 'ealthy appetite,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip Urroar!)
The eagle an' the crow
They are waitin' ever so,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip Urroar!)
Yes, the Large Birds o' Prey
They will carry us away,
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!

[1] Bread soaked in tea.

'SOLDIER AN' SAILOR TOO'

(THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF MARINES)

As I was spittin' into the Ditch aboard o' the *Crocodile*,
I seed a man on a man-o'-war got up in the Reg'lars' style.
'E was scrapin' the paint from off of 'er plates, and I' I sez to 'im, "Oo are you?'
Sez 'e, 'I'm a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier an' sailor too!'
Now 'is work begins by Gawd knows when, an' 'is work is never through;
'E isn't one o' the reg'lar Line, nor 'e isn't one of the crew.
'E's a kind of a giddy harumfrodite—soldier an' sailor too!

An', after, I met 'im all over the world, a-doin' all kinds of things,
Like landin' 'isself with a Gatlin' gun to talk to them 'eathen kings;
'E sleeps in an 'ammick instead of a cot, an' 'e drills with the deck on a slew,
An' 'e sweats like a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier an' sailor too!
For there isn't a job on the top o' the earth the beggar don't know, nor do—
You can leave 'im at night on a bald man's 'ead, to paddle 'is own canoe—

'E's a sort of a bloomin' cosmopolouse—soldier an' sailor too.

We've fought 'em in trooper, we've fought 'em in dock, an' drunk with 'em in betweens,
When they called us the seasick scull'ry-maids, an' we called 'em the Ass-Marines;
But, when we was down for a double fatigue, from Woolwich to Bernardmyo,
We sent for the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
They think for 'emselves, an' they steal for 'emselves, an' they never ask what's to do,
But they're camped an' fed an' they're up an' fed before our bugle's blew.
Ho! they ain't no limpin' procrastitutes—soldier an' sailor too.

You may say we are fond of an 'arness-cut, or 'ootin' in barrick-yards,
Or startin' a Board School mutiny along o' the Onion Guards;[1]
But once in a while we can finish in style for the ends of the earth to view,
The same as the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
They come of our lot, they was brothers to us; they was beggars we'd met an' knew;
Yes, barrin' an inch in the chest an' the arm, they was doubles o' me an' you;

[1] Long ago, a battalion of the Guards was sent to Bermuda as a punishment for riotous conduct in barracks.

For they weren't no special chrysanthemums—soldier an' sailor too!

To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with firin' all about,
Is nothing so bad when you've cover to 'and, an' leave an' likin' to shout;
But to stand an' be still to the *Birken'ead* drill[1] is a damn' tough bullet to chew,
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
Their work was done when it 'adn't begun; they was younger nor me an' you;
Their choice it was plain between drownin' in 'elps an' bein' mopped by the screw,
So they stood an' was still to the *Birken'ead* drill, soldier an' sailor too!

We're most of us liars, we're 'arf of us thieves, an' the rest are as rank as can be,
But once in a while we can finish in style (which I 'ope it won't 'appen to me).
But it makes you think better o' you an' your friends, an' the work you may 'ave to do,
When you think o' the sinkin' *Victorier's*[2] Jollies—soldier an' sailor too!
Now there isn't no room for to say ye don't know—they 'ave proved it plain an' true—

[1] In 1852 the *Birkenhead* transport was sunk off Simon's Bay. The Marines aboard her went down as drawn up on her deck.
[2] Admiral Tryon's flagship, sunk in collision in 1893.

That whether it's Widow, or whether it's ship,
Victorier's work is to do,
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—
soldier an' sailor too!

SAPPERS

(ROYAL ENGINEERS)

WHEN the Waters were dried an' the Earth did appear,
('It's all one,' says the Sapper),
The Lord He created the Engineer,
Her Majesty's Royal Engineer,
With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

When the Flood come along for an extra monsoon,
'Twas Noah constructed the first pontoon
To the plans of Her Majesty's Engineers, etc.

But after fatigue in the wet an' the sun,
Old Noah got drunk, which he wouldn't ha' done
If he'd trained with, etc.

When the Tower o' Babel had mixed up men's *bat*,[1]
Some clever civilian was managin' that,
An' none of, etc.

When the Jews had a fight at the foot of a hill,
Young Joshua ordered the sun to stand still,
For he was a Captain of Engineers, etc.

When the Children of Israel made bricks without straw,
They were learnin' the regular work of our Corps,
The work of, etc.

[1] Language.

For ever since then, if a war they would wage,
Behold us a-shinin' on history's page—
  First page for, etc.

We lay down their sidings an' help 'em entrain,
An' we sweep up their mess through the bloomin' campaign,
  In the style of, etc.

They send us in front with a fuse an' a mine
To blow up the gates that are rushed by the Line,
  But bent by, etc.

They send us behind with a pick an' a spade,
To dig for the guns of a bullock-brigade
  Which has asked for, etc.

We work under escort in trousers and shirt,
An' the heathen they plug us tail-up in the dirt,
  Annoyin', etc.

We blast out the rock an' we shovel the mud,
We make 'em good roads an'—they roll down the *khud*,[1]
  Reportin', etc.

We make 'em their bridges, their wells, an' their huts,
An' the telegraph-wire the enemy cuts,
  An' it's blamed on, etc.

[1] Hillside.

An' when we return, an' from war we would cease,
They grudge us adornin' the billets of peace,
  Which are kept for, etc.

We build 'em nice barracks—they swear they are bad,
That our Colonels are Methodist, married or mad,
  Insultin', etc.

They haven't no manners nor gratitude too,
For the more that we help 'em, the less will they do,
  But mock at, etc.

Now the Line's but a man with a gun in his hand,
An' Cavalry's only what horses can stand,
  When helped by, etc.

Artillery moves by the leave o' the ground,
But *we* are the men that do something all round,
  For *we* are, etc.

I have stated it plain, an' my argument's thus
  ('It's all one,' says the Sapper),
There's only one Corps which is perfect—that's us;
  An' they call us Her Majesty's Engineers,
  Her Majesty's Royal Engineers,
  With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

THAT DAY

It got beyond all orders an' it got beyond all 'ope;
It got to shammin' wounded an' retirin' from the 'alt.
Ole companies was lookin' for the nearest road to slope;
It were just a bloomin' knock-out—an' our fault!

Now there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,
Nor there ain't no band to play;
An' I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,
Or seen what I seed that day!

We was sick o' bein' punished, an' we let 'em know it, too;
An' a company-commander up an' 'it us with a sword,
An' some one shouted "'Ook it!' an' it come to *sove-ki-poo,*
An' we chucked our rifles from us—O my Gawd!

There was thirty dead an' wounded on the ground we wouldn't keep—
No, there wasn't more than twenty when the front begun to go—
But, Christ! along the line o' flight they cut us up like sheep,
An' that was all we gained by doin' so!

I 'eard the knives be'ind me, but I dursn't face my man,
Nor I don't know where I went to, 'cause I didn't 'alt to see,
Till I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as 'e ran,
An' I thought I knew the voice an'—it was me!

We was 'idin' under bedsteads more than 'arf a march away;
We was lyin' up like rabbits all about the country-side;
An' the Major cursed 'is Maker 'cause 'e'd lived to see that day,
An' the Colonel broke 'is sword acrost, an' cried.

We was rotten 'fore we started—we was never disciplined;
We made it out a favour if an order was obeyed.
Yes, every little drummer 'ad 'is rights an' wrongs to mind,
So we had to pay for teachin'—an' we paid!

The papers 'id it 'andsome, but you know the Army knows;
We was put to groomin' camels till the regiments withdrew,
An' they gave us each a medal for subduin' England's foes,
An' I 'ope you like my song—because it's true!

An' there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,
Nor there ain't no band to play;
But I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,
Or seen what I seed that day!

'THE MEN THAT FOUGHT AT MINDEN'

(IN THE LODGE OF INSTRUCTION)

THE men that fought at Minden, they was rookies in their time—
So was them that fought at Waterloo!
All the 'ole command, yuss, from Minden to Maiwand,
They was once dam' sweeps like you!

Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,
We'll learn you not to forget;
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it worse,
For we'll make you soldiers yet!

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad stocks beneath their chins,
Six inch 'igh an' more;
But fatigue it was their pride, an' they *would* not be denied
To clean the cook-'ouse floor.

The men that fought at Minden, they had anarchistic bombs
Served to 'em by name of 'and-grenades;
But they got it in the eye (same as you will by an' by)
When they clubbed their field-parades.

'THE MEN THAT FOUGHT AT MINDEN'

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad buttons up an' down,
Two-an'-twenty dozen of 'em told;
But they didn't grouse an' shirk at an hour's extry work,
They kept 'em bright as gold.

The men that fought at Minden, they was armed with musketoons,
Also, they was drilled by 'alberdiers.
I don't know what they were, but the Sergeants took good care
They washed be'ind their ears.

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad ever cash in 'and
Which they did not bank nor save,
But spent it gay an' free on their betters—such as me—
For the good advice I gave.

The men that fought at Minden, they was civil—yuss, they was—
Never didn't talk o' rights an' wrongs,
But they got it with the toe (same as you will get it —so!)—
For interrupting songs.

The men that fought at Minden, they was several other things
Which I don't remember clear;
But *that*'s the reason why, now the six-year men are dry,
The rooks will stand the beer!

Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,
We'll learn you not to forget;
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it worse,
An' we'll make you soldiers yet!

Soldiers yet, if you've got it in you—
All for the sake of the Core;
Soldiers yet, if we 'ave to skin you—
Run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw—Johnny Raw!
Ho! run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw!

CHOLERA CAMP

(INFANTRY IN INDIA)

WE'VE got the cholerer in camp—it's worse than forty fights;
We're dyin' in the wilderness the same as Isrulites
It's before us, an' be'ind us, an' we cannot get away,
An' the doctor's just reported we've ten more to-day!

Oh, strike your camp an' go, the bugle's callin',
The Rains are fallin'—
The dead are bushed an' stoned to keep 'em safe below.
The Band's a-doin' all she knows to cheer us;
The Chaplain's gone an' prayed to Gawd to 'ear us—
To 'ear us—
O Lord, for it's a-killin' of us so!

Since August, when it started, it's been stickin' to our tail,
Though they've 'ad us out by marches an' they've 'ad us back by rail;
But it runs as fast as troop-trains, an' we cannot get away,
An' the sick-list to the Colonel makes ten more to-day.

There ain't no fun in women nor there ain't no bite to drink;
It's much too wet for shootin'; we can only march an' think;

An' at evenin', down the *nullahs*, we can 'ear the jackals say,
'Get up, you rotten beggars, you've ten more to-day!'

'Twould make a monkey cough to see our way o' doin' things—
Lieutenants takin' companies an' Captains takin' wings,
An' Lances actin' Sergeants—eight file to obey—
For we've lots o' quick promotion on ten deaths a day!

Our Colonel's white an' twitterly—'e gets no sleep nor food,
But mucks about in 'orspital where nothing does no good.
'E sends us 'eaps o' comforts, all bought from 'is pay—
But there aren't much comfort 'andy on ten deaths a day.

Our Chaplain's got a banjo, an' a skinny mule 'e rides,
An' the stuff 'e says an' sings us, Lord, it makes us split our sides!
With 'is black coat-tails a-bobbin' to *Ta-ra-ra Boom-der-ay!*
'E's the proper kind o' *padre* for ten deaths a day.

An' Father Victor 'elps 'im with our Roman Cath-olicks—
He knows an 'eap of Irish songs an' rummy conjurin'-tricks;
An' the two they works together when it comes to play or pray.
So we keep the ball a-rollin' on ten deaths a day.

We've got the cholerer in camp—we've got it 'ot an' sweet.
It ain't no Christmas dinner, but it's 'elped an' we must eat.
We've gone beyond the funkin', 'cause we've found it doesn't pay,
An' we're rockin' round the District on ten deaths a day!

Then strike your camp an' go, the Rains are fallin',
The bugle's callin'!
The dead are bushed an' stoned to keep 'em safe below!
An' them that do not like it they can lump it,
An' them that cannot stand it they can jump it;
We've got to die somewhere—some way—some'ow—
We might as well begin to do it now!
Then, Number One, let down the tent-pole slow,
Knock out the pegs an' 'old the corners—so!
Fold in the flies, furl up the ropes, an' stow!
Oh, strike—oh, strike your camp an' go!
(Gawd 'elp us!)

THE LADIES

I've taken my fun where I've found it;
  I've rogued an' I've ranged in my time;
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweethearts,
  An' four o' the lot was prime.
One was an 'arf-caste widow,
  One was a woman at Prome,
One was the wife of a *jemadar-sais*,[1]
  An' one is a girl at 'ome.

Now I aren't no 'and with the ladies,
  For, takin' 'em all along,
You never can say till you've tried 'em,
  An' then you are like to be wrong.
There's times when you'll think that you mightn't,
  There's times when you'll know that you might;
But the things you will learn from the Yellow an' Brown,
  They'll 'elp you a lot with the White!

I was a young 'un at 'Oogli,
  Shy as a girl to begin;
Aggie de Castrer she made me,
  An' Aggie was clever as sin;
Older than me, but my first 'un—
  More like a mother she were—
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,
  An' I learned about women from 'er!

[1] Head-groom.

Then I was ordered to Burma,
  Actin' in charge o' Bazar,
An' I got me a tiddy live 'eathen
  Through buyin' supplies off 'er pa.
Funny an' yellow an' faithful—
  Doll in a teacup she were—
But we lived on the square, like a true-married pair,
  An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then we was shifted to Neemuch
  (Or I might ha' been keepin' 'er now).
An' I took with a shiny she-devil,
  The wife of a nigger at Mhow;
'Taught me the gipsy-folks' *bolee*;[1]
  Kind o' volcano she were,
For she knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was
    white,
  An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then I come 'ome in a trooper,
  'Long of a kid o' sixteen—
Girl from a convent at Meerut,
  The straightest I ever 'ave seen.
Love at first sight was 'er trouble,
  She didn't know what it were;
An' I wouldn't do such, 'cause I liked 'er too much,
  But—I learned about women from 'er!

I've taken my fun where I've found it,
  An' now I must pay for my fun,
For the more you 'ave known o' the others
  The less will you settle to one;

[1] Slang.

An' the end of it's sittin' an' thinkin',
An' dreamin' Hell-fires to see.
So be warned by my lot (which I know you will not),
An' learn about women from me!

What did the Colonel's Lady think?
Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the Sergeant's Wife,
An' *she told 'em true!*
When you get to a man in the case,
They're like as a row of pins—
For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins!

'BILL 'AWKINS'

''As anybody seen Bill 'Awkins?'
'Now 'ow in the devil would I know?
''E's taken my girl out walkin',
An' I've got to tell 'im so—
Gawd—bless—'im!
I've got to tell 'im so.'

'D'yer know what 'e's like, Bill 'Awkins?'
'Now what in the devil would I care?'
''E's the livin', breathin' image of an organ-grinder's monkey,
With a pound of grease in 'is 'air—
Gawd—bless—'im!
An' a pound o' grease in 'is 'air.'

'An' s'pose you met Bill 'Awkins,
Now what in the devil 'ud ye do?'
'I'd open 'is cheek to 'is chin-strap buckle,
An' bung up 'is both eyes, too—
Gawd—bless—'im!
An' bung up 'is both eyes, too!'

'Look 'ere, where 'e comes, Bill 'Awkins!
Now what in the devil will you say?'
'It isn't fit an' proper to be fightin' on a Sunday,
So I'll pass 'im the time o' day—
Gawd—bless—'im!
I'll pass 'im the time o' day!'

THE MOTHER-LODGE

THERE was Rundle, Station Master,
An' Beazeley of the Rail,
An' 'Ackman, Commissariat,
An' Donkin o' the Jail;
An' Blake, Conductor-Sergeant,
Our Master twice was 'e,
With 'im that kept the Europe-shop,
Old Framjee Eduljee.

Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!'
Inside—'Brother,' an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!

We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,
An' Saul the Aden Jew,
An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman
Of the Survey Office too;
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,
The Roman Catholick!

We 'adn't good regalia,
An' our Lodge was old an' bare,
But we knew the Ancient Landmarks,
An' we kep' 'em to a hair;

An' lookin' on it backwards
  It often strikes me thus,
There ain't such things as infidels,
  Excep', per'aps, it's us.

For monthly, after Labour,
  We'd all sit down an' smoke
(We dursn't give no banquets,
  Lest a Brother's caste were broke),
An' man on man got talkin'
  Religion an' the rest,
An' every man comparin'
  Of the God 'e knew the best.

So man on man got talkin',
  An' not a Brother stirred
Till mornin' waked the parrots
  An' that dam' brain-fever-bird;
We'd say 'twas 'ighly curious,
  An' we'd all ride 'ome to bed,
With Mo'ammed, God, an' Shiva
  Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on Guv'ment service
  This rovin' foot 'ath pressed,
An' bore fraternal greetin's
  To the Lodges east an' west,
Accordin' as commanded,
  From Kohat to Singapore,
But I wish that I might see them
  In my Mother-Lodge once more!

I wish that I might see them,
My Brethren black an' brown,
With the trichies smellin' pleasant
An' the *hog-darn*[1] passing down;
An' the old *khansamah*[2] snorin'
On the *bottle-khana*[3] floor,
Like a Master in good standing
With my Mother-Lodge once more.

Outside—'Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!'
Inside—'Brother,' an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!

[1] Cigar-lighter. [2] Butler. [3] Pantry.

'FOLLOW ME 'OME'

THERE was no one like 'im, 'Orse or Foot,
Nor any o' the Guns I knew;
An' because it was so, why, o' course 'e went an' died,
Which is just what the best men do.

So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!
An' it's finish up your swipes an' follow me!
Oh, 'ark to the big drum callin',
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

'Is mare she neighs the 'ole day long,
She paws the 'ole night through,
An she won't take 'er feed 'cause o' waitin' for 'is step,
Which is just what a beast would do.

'Is girl she goes with a Bombardier
Before 'er month is through;
An' the banns are up in church, for she's got the beggar hooked,
Which is just what a girl would do.

We fought 'bout a dog—last week it were—
No more than a round or two;
But I strook 'im cruel 'ard, an' I wish I 'adn't now,
Which is just what a man can't do.

'E was all that I 'ad in the way of a friend,
An' I've 'ad to find one new;
But I'd give my pay an' stripe for to get the beggar back,
Which it's just too late to do!

So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!
An' it's finish up your swipes an' follow me!
Oh, 'ark to the fifes a-crawlin'!
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

Take 'im away! 'E's gone where the best men go.
Take 'im away! An' the gun-wheels turnin' slow.
Take 'im away! There's more from the place 'e come.
Take 'im away, with the limber an' the drum.

For it's 'Three rounds blank' an' follow me,
An' it's 'Thirteen rank' an' follow me;
Oh, passin' the love o' women,
Follow me—follow me 'ome!

'THE SERGEANT'S WEDDIN''

'E WAS warned agin 'er—
  That's what made 'im look;
She was warned agin 'im—
  That is why she took.
'Wouldn't 'ear no reason,
  'Went an' done it blind;
We know all about 'em,
  They've got all to find!

Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—
  Give 'em one cheer more!
Grey gun-'orses in the lando,
  An' a rogue is married to, etc.

What's the use o' tellin'
  'Arf the lot she's been?
'E's a bloomin' robber,
  An' 'e keeps canteen.
'Ow did 'e get 'is buggy?
  Gawd, you needn't ask!
'Made 'is forty gallon
  Out of every cask!

Watch 'im, with 'is 'air cut,
  Count us filin' by—
Won't the Colonel praise 'is
  Pop—u—lar—i—ty!
We 'ave scores to settle—
  Scores for more than beer;
She's the girl to pay 'em—
  That is why we're 'ere!

See the Chaplain thinkin'?
  See the women smile?
Twig the married winkin'
  As they take the aisle?
Keep your side-arms quiet,
  Dressin' by the Band.
Ho! You 'oly beggars,
  Cough be'ind your 'and!

Now it's done an' over,
  'Ear the organ squeak,
"*Voice that breathed o'er Eden*"—
  Ain't she got the cheek!
White an' laylock ribbons,
  'Think yourself so fine!
I'd pray Gawd to take yer
  'Fore I made yer mine!

Escort to the kerridge,
  Wish 'im luck, the brute!
Chuck the slippers after—
  [Pity 'taint a boot!]
Bowin' like a lady,
  Blushin' like a lad—
'Oo would say to see 'em
  Both is rotten bad?

Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—
  Give 'em one cheer more!
Grey gun-'orses in the lando,
  An' a rogue is married to, etc.

'THE JACKET'

(ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY)

THROUGH the Plagues of Egyp' we was chasin' Arabi,
Gettin' down an' shovin' in the sun;
An' you might 'ave called us dirty, an' you might 'a' called us dry,
An' you might 'ave 'eard us talkin' at the gun.
But the Captain 'ad 'is jacket, an' the jacket it was new—
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
An' the wettin' of the jacket is the proper thing to do,
Nor we didn't keep 'im waitin' very long.

One day they gave us orders for to shell a sand redoubt,
Loadin' down the axle-arms with case;
But the Captain knew 'is dooty, an' he took the crackers out
An' he put some proper liquor in its place.
An' the Captain saw the shrapnel, which is six-an'-thirty clear.
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
'Will you draw the weight,' sez 'e, 'or will you draw the beer?'
An' we didn't keep 'im waitin' very long.

For the Captain 'ad 'is jacket, etc.

Then we trotted gentle, not to break the bloomin' glass,
Though the Arabites 'ad all their ranges marked;
But we dursn't 'ardly gallop, for the most was bottled Bass,
An' we'd dreamed of it since we was disembarked.
So we fired economic with the shells we 'ad in 'and,
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
But the beggars under cover 'ad the impidence to stand,
An' we couldn't keep 'em waitin' very long.

An' the Captain, etc.

So we finished orf the liquor (an' the Captain took champagne),
An' the Arabites was shootin' all the while;
An' we left our wounded 'appy with the empties on the plain,
An' we used the bloomin' guns for proje*ctile*!
We limbered up an' galloped—there were nothin' else to do—
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!)
An' the Battery came a-boundin' like a boundin' kangaroo,
But they didn't watch us comin' very long.

As the Captain, etc.

We was goin' most extended—we was drivin' very fine,
An' the Arabites were loosin' 'igh an' wide,
Till the Captain took the glacis with a rattlin' 'right incline,'
An' we dropped upon their 'eads the other side.

Then we give 'em quarter—such as 'adn't up an' cut
('Orse Gunners, listen to my song!),
An' the Captain stood a limberful of fizzy somethin'
Brutt,
But we didn't leave it fizzin' very long.

For the Captain, etc.

We might ha' been court-martialled, but it all cor ıe
out all right.
When they signalled us to join the main commar d,
There was every round expended, there was eve y
gunner tight,
An' the Captain waved a corkscrew in 'is 'and!

But the Captain 'ad 'is jacket, etc.

'THE 'EATHEN'

THE 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about,
An' then comes up the Regiment an' pokes the 'eathen out.

All along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess,
All along o' doin' things rather-more-or-less,
All along of abby-nay,[1] kul,[2] *an'* hazar-ho,[3]
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!

The young recruit is 'aughty—'e draf's from Gawd knows where;
They bid 'im show 'is stockin's an' lay 'is mattress square;
'E calls it bloomin' nonsense—'e doesn't know no more—
An' then up comes 'is Company an' kicks 'im round the floor!

The young recruit is 'ammered—'e takes it very 'ard;
'E 'angs 'is 'ead an' mutters—'e sulks about the yard;
'E talks o' 'cruel tyrants' which 'e'll swing for by-an'-by,
An' the others 'ears an' mocks 'im, an' the boy goes orf to cry.

[1] Not now. [2] To-morrow. [3] Wait a bit.

The young recruit is silly—'e thinks o' suicide.
'E's lost 'is gutter-devil; 'e 'asn't got 'is pride;
But day by day they kicks 'im, which 'elps 'im on a bit,
Till 'e finds 'isself one mornin' with a full an' proper kit.

Gettin' clear o' dirtiness, gettin' done with mess
Gettin' shut o' doin' things rather-more-or-less;
Not so fond of abby-nay, kul, *nor* hazar-ho,
Learns to keep 'is rifle an' 'isself jus' so!

The young recruit is 'appy—'e throws a chest to s uit;
You see 'im grow mustaches; you 'ear 'im slap 'is bcot.
'E learns to drop the 'bloodies' from every worc 'e slings,
An' 'e shows an 'ealthy brisket when 'e strips for bars an' rings.

The cruel-tyrant-Sergeants they watch 'im 'arf a year;
They watch 'im with 'is comrades, they watch 'im with 'is beer;
They watch 'im with the women at the Regimental dance,
An' the cruel-tyrant-Sergeants send 'is name along for 'Lance.'

An' now 'e's 'arf o' nothin', an' all a private yet,
'Is room they up an' rags 'im to see what they will get.
They rags 'im low an' cunnin', each dirty trick they can,
But 'e learns to sweat 'is temper an' 'e learns to sweat 'is man.

An', last, a Colour-Sergeant, as such to be obeyed,
'E schools 'is men at cricket, 'e tells 'em on parade;
They sees 'im quick an' 'andy, uncommon set an' smart,
An' so 'e talks to orficers which 'ave the Core at 'eart.

'E learns to do 'is watchin' without it showin' plain;
'E learns to save a dummy, an' shove 'im straight again;
'E learns to check a ranker that's buyin' leave to shirk;
An' 'e learns to make men like 'im so they'll learn to like their work.

An' when it comes to marchin' he'll see their socks are right,
An' when it comes to action 'e shows 'em how to sight.
'E knows their ways of thinkin' an' just what's in their mind;
'E knows when they are takin' on an' when they've fell be'ind.

'E knows each talkin' Corp'ral that leads a squad astray;
'E feels 'is innards 'eavin', 'is bowels givin' way;
'E sees the blue-white faces all tryin' 'ard to grin,
An' 'e stands an' waits an' suffers till it's time to cap 'em in.

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the dust,
An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;

So, like a man in irons, which isn't glad to go,
They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an' slow.

Of all 'is five years' schoolin' they don't remember much
Excep' the not retreatin', the step an' keepin' touch.
It looks like teachin' wasted when they duck an' spread an' 'op—
But if 'e 'adn't learned 'em they'd be all about the shop!

An' now it's ''Oo goes backward?' an' now it's ''Oo comes on?'
And now it's 'Get the *doolies*,' an' now the Captain's gone;
An' now it's bloody murder, but all the while they 'ear
'Is voice, the same as barrick-drill, a-shepherdin' the rear.

'E's just as sick as they are, 'is 'eart is like to split,
But 'e works 'em, works 'em, works 'em till he feels 'em take the bit;
The rest is 'oldin' steady till the watchful bugles play,
An' 'e lifts 'em, lifts 'em, lifts 'em through the charge that wins the day!

The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own.
The 'eathen in 'is blindness must end where 'e began,
But the backbone of the Army is the Non-commissioned man!

Keep away from dirtiness—keep away from mess,
Don't get into doin' things rather-more-or-less!
Let's ha' done with abby-nay, kul, *an'* hazar-ho;
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!

THE SHUT-EYE SENTRY

SEZ the Junior Orderly Sergeant
To the Senior Orderly Man:
'Our Orderly Orf cer's *hokee-mut*,[1]
You 'elp 'im all you can.
For the wine was old an' the night is cold,
An' the best we may go wrong;
So, 'fore 'e gits to the sentry-box,
You pass the word along.'

So it was 'Rounds! What Rounds?' at two of a frosty night.
'E's 'oldin' on by the Sergeant's sash, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well! Oh, ain't 'e drippin' tight!
'E'll need an affidavit pretty badly by-an'-by.'

The moon was white on the barricks,
The road was white an' wide,
An' the Orderly Orf'cer took it all,
An' the ten-foot ditch beside.
An' the Corporal pulled an' the Sergeant pushed,
An' the three they danced along,
But I'd shut my eyes in the sentry-box,
So I didn't see nothin' wrong.

Though it was 'Rounds! What Rounds?' Oh, Corporal, 'old 'im up!
'E's usin' 'is cap as it shouldn't be used, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well! Ho, shun the foamin' cup!
'E'll need,' etc.

[1] Very drunk.

'Twas after four in the mornin';
We 'ad to stop the fun,
An' we sent 'im 'ome on a bullock-cart,
With 'is belt an' stock undone;
But we sluiced 'im down an' we washed 'im out,
An' a first-class job we made,
When we saved 'im, smart as a Bombardier,
For six o'clock parade.

It 'ad been 'Rounds! What Rounds?' Oh, shove 'im straight again!
'E's usin' 'is sword for a bicycle, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it was 'Pass! All's well! 'E's called me "Darlin' Jane"!
'E'll need,' etc.

The drill was long an' 'eavy,
The sky was 'ot an' blue,
An' 'is eye was wild an' 'is 'air was wet,
But 'is Sergeant pulled 'im through.
Our men was good old trusties—
They'd done it on their 'ead—
But you ought to 'ave 'eard 'em markin' time
To 'ide the things 'e said!

For it was 'Right flank—wheel!' for "'Alt, an' stand at ease!'
An' 'Left extend!' for 'Centre close!' Oh, marker, shut your eye!
An' it was, "'Ere, sir, 'ere! before the Colonel sees!'
So he needed affidavits pretty badly by-an'-by.

There was two-an'-thirty Sergeants,
  There was Corp'rals forty-one,
There was just nine 'undred rank an' file
  To swear to a touch o' sun.
There was me 'e'd kissed in the sentry-box,
  As I 'ave not told in my song,
But I took my oath, which were Bible truth,
  I 'adn't seen nothin' wrong.

There's them that's 'ot an' 'aughty,
  There's them that's cold an' 'ard,
But there comes a night when the best gets tight,
  And then turns out the Guard.
I've seen them 'ide their liquor
  In every kind o' way,
But most depends on makin' friends
  With Privit Thomas A.!

When it is 'Rounds! What Rounds?' 'E's breathin' through 'is nose.
'E's reelin', rollin', roarin', tight, but, sentry, shut your eye.
An' it is 'Pass! All's well!' An' that's the way it goes.
We'll 'elp 'im for 'is mother, an' 'e'll 'elp us by-an'-by!

'MARY, PITY WOMEN!'

YOU call yourself a man,
  For all you used to swear,
An' leave me, as you can,
  My certain shame to bear?
  I 'ear! You do not care—
You done the worst you know.
  I 'ate you, grinnin' there. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

'Nice while it lasted, an' now it is over—
Tear out your 'eart an' good-bye to your lover!
What's the use o' grievin', when the mother that bore you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?

It aren't no false alarm,
  The finish to your fun;
You—you 'ave brung the 'arm,
  An' I'm the ruined one!
  An' now you'll off an' run
With some new fool in tow.
  Your 'eart? You 'aven't none. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

When a man is tired there is naught will bind 'im;
All 'e solemn promised 'e will shove be'ind 'im.
What's the good o' prayin' for The Wrath to strike 'im
(Mary, pity women!), when the rest are like 'im?

What 'ope for me or—it?
  What's left for us to do?
I've walked with men a bit,
  But this—but this is you.
  So 'elp me Christ, it's true!
Where can I 'ide or go?
  You coward through and through! . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

All the more you give 'em the less are they for givin'—
Love lies dead, an' you cannot kiss 'im livin'.
Down the road 'e led you there is no returnin'
(Mary, pity women!), but you're late in learnin'!

You'd like to treat me fair?
  You can't, because we're pore?
We'd starve? What do I care!
  We might, but *this* is shore!
  I want the name—no more—
The name, an' lines to show,
  An' not to be an 'ore. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

What's the good o' pleadin', when the mother that bore you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?
Sleep on 'is promises an' wake to your sorrow
(Mary, pity women!), for we sail to-morrow!

'FOR TO ADMIRE'

THE Injian Ocean sets an' smiles
So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;
There aren't a wave for miles an' miles
Excep' the jiggle from the screw.
The ship is swep', the day is done,
The bugle's gone for smoke and play;
An' black ag'in' the settin' sun
The Lascar sings, '*Hum deckty hai!*'[1]

For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!

I see the Sergeants pitchin' quoits,
I 'ear the women laugh an' talk,
I spy upon the quarter-deck
The orficers an' lydies walk.
I thinks about the things that was,
An' leans an' looks acrost the sea,
Till, spite of all the crowded ship,
There's no one lef' alive but me.

The things that was which I 'ave seen,
In barrick, camp, an' action too,
I tells them over by myself,
An' sometimes wonders if they're true;

[1] I'm looking out.

For they was odd—most awful odd—
  But all the same now they are o'er,
There must be 'eaps o' plenty such,
  An' if I wait I'll see some more.

Oh, I 'ave come upon the books,
  An' frequent broke a barrick-rule,
An' stood beside an' watched myself
  Be'avin' like a bloomin' fool.
I paid my price for findin' out,
  Nor never grutched the price I paid,
But sat in Clink without my boots,
  Admirin' 'ow the world was made.

Be'old a cloud upon the beam,
  An' 'umped above the sea appears
Old Aden, like a barrick-stove
  That no one's lit for years an' years.
I passed by that when I began,
  An' I go 'ome the road I came,
A time-expired soldier-man
  With six years' service to 'is name.

My girl she said, 'Oh, stay with me!'
  My mother 'eld me to 'er breast.
They've never written none, an' so
  They must 'ave gone with all the rest—
With all the rest which I 'ave seen
  An' found an' known an' met along.
I cannot say the things I feel,
  And so I sing my evenin' song:

For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide—
It never done no good to me,
But I can't drop it if I tried!

L'ENVOI

1892

WHEN Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an aeon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew.

And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only The Master shall praise us, and only The Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They are!

THE END

THE FIVE NATIONS

AND SERVICE SONGS

DEDICATION

1903

BEFORE a midnight breaks in storm,
Or herded sea in wrath,
Ye know what wavering gusts inform
The greater tempest's path;
Till the loosed wind
Drive all from mind,
Except Distress, which, so will prophets cry,
O'ercame them, houseless, from the unhinting sky.

Ere rivers league against the land
In piratry of flood,
Ye know what waters steal and stand
Where seldom water stood.
Yet who will note,
Till fields afloat,
And washen carcass and the returning well,
Trumpet what these poor heralds strove to tell?

Ye know who use the Crystal Ball
(To peer by stealth on Doom),
The Shade that, shaping first of all,
Prepares an empty room.
Then doth It pass
Like breath from glass,
But, on the extorted Vision bowed intent,
No man considers why It came or went.

Before the years reborn behold
Themselves with stranger eye,
And the sport-making Gods of old,
Like Samson slaying, die,
Many shall hear
The all-pregnant sphere,
Bow to the birth and sweat, but—speech denied—
Sit dumb or—dealt in part—fall weak and wide.

Yet instant to fore-shadowed need
The eternal balance swings;
That winged men the Fates may breed
So soon as Fate hath wings.
These shall possess
Our littleness,
And in the imperial task (as worthy) lay
Up our lives' all to piece one giant Day.

THE FIVE NATIONS

THE SEA AND THE HILLS

1902

WHO hath desired the Sea?—the sight of salt water unbounded—
The heave and the halt and the hurl and the crash of the comber wind-hounded?
The sleek-barrelled swell before storm, grey, foamless, enormous, and growing—
Stark calm on the lap of the Line or the crazy-eyed hurricane blowing—
His Sea in no showing the same—his Sea and the same 'neath each showing:
His Sea as she slackens or thrills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise—hillmen desire their Hills!

Who hath desired the Sea?—the immense and contemptuous surges?
The shudder, the stumble, the swerve, as the star-stabbing bowsprit emerges?
The orderly clouds of the Trades, the ridged, roaring sapphire thereunder—
Unheralded cliff-haunting flaws and the headsail's low-volleying thunder—
His Sea in no wonder the same—his Sea and the same through each wonder:
His Sea as she rages or stills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise—hillmen desire their Hills.

Who hath desired the Sea? Her menaces swift as her
mercies?
The in-rolling walls of the fog and the silver-winged
breeze that disperses?
The unstable mined berg going South and the calv-
ings and groans that declare it—
White water half-guessed overside and the moon break-
ing timely to bare it—
His Sea as his fathers have dared—his Sea as his chil-
dren shall dare it:
His Sea as she serves him or kills?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise—hillmen
desire their Hills.

Who hath desired the Sea? Her excellent loneliness
rather
Than forecourts of Kings, and her outermost pits than
the streets where men gather
Inland, among dust, under trees—inland where the
slayer may slay him—
Inland, out of reach of her arms, and the bosom
whereon he must lay him—
His Sea at the first that betrayed—at the last that shall
never betray him:
His Sea that his being fulfils?
So and no otherwise—so and no otherwise—hillmen
desire their Hills.

THE BELL BUOY

1896

THEY christened my brother of old—
  And a saintly name he bears—
They gave him his place to hold
  At the head of the belfry-stairs,
  Where the minster-towers stand
And the breeding kestrels cry.
  Would I change with my brother a league inland?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

In the flush of the hot June prime
  O'er sleek flood-tides afire,
I hear him hurry the chime
  To the bidding of checked Desire;
  Till the sweated ringers tire
And the wild bob-majors die.
  Could I wait for my turn in the godly choir?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

When the smoking scud is blown—
  When the greasy wind-rack lowers—
Apart and at peace and alone,
  He counts the changeless hours.
  He wars with darkling Powers
(I war with a darkling sea);
  Would he stoop to my work in the gusty mirk?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not he!

There was never a priest to pray,
  There was never a hand to toll,
When they made me guard of the bay,
  And moored me over the shoal.
  I rock, I reel, and I roll—
My four great hammers ply—
  Could I speak or be still at the Church's will?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

The landward marks have failed,
  The fog-bank glides unguessed,
The seaward lights are veiled,
  The spent deep feigns her rest:
  But my ear is laid to her breast,
I lift to the swell—I cry!
  Could I wait in sloth on the Church's oath?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

At the careless end of night
  I thrill to the nearing screw;
I turn in the clearing light
  And I call to the drowsy crew;
  And the mud boils foul and blue
As the blind bow backs away.
  Will they give me their thanks if they clear
    the banks?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not they!

The beach-pools cake and skim,
  The bursting spray-heads freeze,
I gather on crown and rim
  The grey, grained ice of the seas,

Where, sheathed from bitt to trees,
The plunging colliers lie.
Would I barter my place for the Church's grace?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

Through the blur of the whirling snow,
Or the black of the inky sleet,
The lanterns gather and grow,
And I look for the homeward fleet.
Rattle of block and sheet—
'Ready about—stand by!'
Shall I ask them a fee ere they fetch the quay?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

I dip and I surge and I swing
In the rip of the racing tide,
By the gates of doom I sing,
On the horns of death I ride.
A ship-length overside,
Between the course and the sand,
Fretted and bound I bide
Peril whereof I cry.
Would I change with my brother a league inland?
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

CRUISERS

1899

As our mother the Frigate, bepainted and fine,
Made play for her bully the Ship of the Line;
So we, her bold daughters by iron and fire,
Accost and decoy to our masters' desire.

Now, pray you, consider what toils we endure,
Night-walking wet sea-lanes, a guard and a lure;
Since half of our trade is that same pretty sort
As mettlesome wenches do practise in port.

For this is our office—to spy and make room,
As hiding yet guiding the foe to their doom;
Surrounding, confounding, we bait and betray
And tempt them to battle the sea's width away.

The pot-bellied merchant foreboding no wrong
With headlight and sidelight he lieth along,
Till, lightless and lightfoot and lurking, leap we
To force him discover his business by sea.

And when we have wakened the lust of a foe,
To draw him by flight toward our bullies we go,
Till, 'ware of strange smokes stealing nearer, he flies
Ere our bullies close in for to make him good prize.

So, when we have spied on the path of their host,
One flieth to carry that word to the coast;
And, lest by false doublings they turn and go free,
One lieth behind them to follow and see.

Anon we return, being gathered again,
Across the sad valleys all drabbled with rain—
Across the grey ridges all crispèd and curled—
To join the long dance round the curve of the world.

The bitter salt spindrift, the sun-glare likewise,
The moon-track a-tremble, bewilders our eyes,
Where, linking and lifting, our sisters we hail
'Twixt wrench of cross-surges or plunge of head-gale.

As maidens awaiting the bride to come forth
Make play with light jestings and wit of no worth
So, widdershins circling the bride-bed of Death,
Each fleereth her neighbour and signeth and saith:—

'What see ye? Their signals, or levin afar?
What hear ye? God's thunder, or guns of our war?
What mark ye? Their smoke, or the cloud-rack out-
blown?
What chase ye? Their lights, or the Daystar low down?'

So, times past all number deceived by false shows,
Deceiving we cumber the road of our foes,
For this is our virtue: to track and betray;
Preparing great battles a sea's width away.

Now peace is at end and our peoples take heart,
For the laws are clean gone that restrainèd our art;
Up and down the near headlands and against the far wind
We are loosed (Oh, be swift!) to the work of our kind!

THE DESTROYERS

1898

THE strength of twice three thousand horse
That seeks the single goal;
The line that holds the rending course,
The hate that swings the whole:
The stripped hulls, slinking through the gloom,
At gaze and gone again—
The Brides of Death that wait the groom—
The Choosers of the Slain!

Offshore where sea and skyline blend
In rain, the daylight dies;
The sullen, shouldering swells attend
Night and our sacrifice.
Adown the stricken capes no flare—
No mark on spit or bar,—
Girdled and desperate we dare
The blindfold game of war.

Nearer the up-flung beams that spell
The council of our foes;
Clearer the barking guns that tell
Their scattered flank to close.
Sheer to the trap they crowd their way
From ports for this unbarred.
Quiet, and count our laden prey,
The convoy and her guard!

On shoal with scarce a foot below,
  Where rock and islet throng,
Hidden and hushed we watch them throw
  Their anxious lights along.
Not here, not here your danger lies—
  (Stare hard, O hooded eyne!)
Save where the dazed rock-pigeons rise
  The lit cliffs give no sign.

Therefore—to break the rest ye seek,
  The Narrow Seas to clear—
Hark to the siren's whimpering shriek—
  The driven death is here!
Look to your van a league away,
  What midnight terror stays
The bulk that checks against the spray
  Her crackling tops ablaze?

Hit, and hard hit! The blow went home,
  The muffled, knocking stroke—
The steam that overruns the foam—
  The foam that thins to smoke—
The smoke that clokes the deep a-boil—
  The deep that chokes her throes
Till, streaked with ash and sleeked with oil,
  The lukewarm whirlpools close!

A shadow down the sickened wave
  Long since her slayer fled:
But hear their chattering quick-fires rave
  Astern, abeam, ahead!
Panic that shells the drifting spar—

Loud waste with none to check—
Mad fear that rakes a scornful star
Or sweeps a consort's deck.

Now, while their silly smoke hangs thick,
Now ere their wits they find,
Lay in and lance them to the quick—
Our gallied whales are blind!
Good luck to those that see the end,
Good-bye to those that drown—
For each his chance as chance shall send—
And God for all! *Shut down!*

The strength of twice three thousand horse
That serve the one command;
The hand that heaves the headlong force,
The hate that backs the hand:
The doom-bolt in the darkness freed,
The mine that splits the main;
The white-hot wake, the 'wildering speed—
The Choosers of the Slain!

WHITE HORSES

1897

WHERE run your colts at pasture?
Where hide your mares to breed?
'Mid bergs about the Ice-cap
Or wove Sargasso weed;
By chartless reef and channel,
Or crafty coastwise bars,
But most the ocean-meadows
All purple to the stars!

Who holds the rein upon you?
The latest gale let free.
What meat is in your mangers?
The glut of all the sea.
'Twixt tide and tide's returning
Great store of newly dead,—
The bones of those that faced us,
And the hearts of those that fled.

Afar, off-shore and single,
Some stallion, rearing swift,
Neighs hungry for new fodder,
And calls us to the drift:
Then down the cloven ridges—
A million hooves unshod—
Break forth the mad White Horses
To seek their meat from God!

Girth-deep in hissing water
  Our furious vanguard strains—
Through mist of mighty tramplings
  Roll up the fore-blown manes—
A hundred leagues to leeward,
  Ere yet the deep is stirred,
The groaning rollers carry
  The coming of the herd!

Whose hand may grip your nostrils—
  Your forelock who may hold?
E'en they that use the broads with us-
  The riders bred and bold,
That spy upon our matings,
  That rope us where we run—
They know the strong White Horses
  From father unto son.

We breathe about their cradles,
  We race their babes ashore,
We snuff against their thresholds,
  We nuzzle at their door;
By day with stamping squadrons,
  By night in whinnying droves,
Creep up the wise White Horses,
  To call them from their loves.

And come they for your calling?
  No wit of man may save.
They hear the loosed White Horses
  Above their fathers' grave;
And, kin to those we crippled,

And, sons of those we slew,
Spur down the wild white riders
To school the herds anew.

What service have ye paid them,
O jealous steeds and strong?
Save we that throw their weaklings,
Is none dare work them wrong;
While thick around the homestead
Our snow-backed leaders graze—
A guard behind their plunder,
And a veil before their ways.

With march and countermarchings—
With weight of wheeling hosts—
Stray mob or bands embattled—
We ring the chosen coasts:
And, careless of our clamour
That bids the stranger fly,
At peace within our pickets
The wild white riders lie.

. . . . . .

Trust ye the curdled hollows—
Trust ye the neighing wind—
Trust ye the moaning groundswell—
Our herds are close behind!
To bray your foeman's armies—
To chill and snap his sword—
Trust ye the wild White Horses,
The Horses of the Lord!

THE SECOND VOYAGE

1903

WE'VE sent our little Cupids all ashore—
They were frightened, they were tired, they were cold.
Our sails of silk and purple go to store,
And we've cut away our mast of beaten gold.
(Foul weather!)
Oh, 'tis hemp and singing pine for to stand against the brine,
But Love he is our master as of old!

The sea has shorn our galleries away,
The salt has soiled our gilding past remede;
Our paint is flaked and blistered by the spray,
Our sides are half a fathom furred in weed.
(Foul weather!)
And the Doves of Venus fled and the petrels came instead,
But Love he was our master at our need!

'Was Youth would keep no vigil at the bow,
'Was Pleasure at the helm too drunk to steer—
We've shipped three able quartermasters now.
Men call them Custom, Reverence, and Fear.
(Foul weather!)
They are old and scarred and plain, but we'll run no risk again
From any Port o' Paphos mutineer!

We seek no more the tempest for delight,
  We skirt no more the indraught and the shoal—
We ask no more of any day or night
  Than to come with least adventure to our goal.
                (Foul weather!)
What we find we needs must brook, but we do not go to look,
  Nor tempt the Lord our God that saved us whole.

Yet, caring so, not overmuch we care
  To brace and trim for every foolish blast—
If the squall be pleased to sweep us unaware,
  He may bellow off to leeward like the last.
                (Foul weather!)
We will blame it on the deep (for the watch must have their sleep),
  And Love can come and wake us when 'tis past.

Oh, launch them down with music from the beach,
  Oh, warp them out with garlands from the quays—
Most resolute—a damsel unto each—
  New prows that seek the old Hesperides!
                (Foul weather!)
Though we know their voyage is vain, yet we see our path again
  In the saffroned bridesails scenting all the seas!
                (Foul weather!)

THE DYKES

1902

We have no heart for the fishing—we have no hand for the oar—
All that our fathers taught us of old pleases us now no more.
All that our own hearts bid us believe we doubt where we do not deny—
There is no proof in the bread we eat nor rest in the toil we ply.

Look you, our foreshore stretches far through sea-gate, dyke, and groyne—
Made land all, that our fathers made, where the flats and the fairway join.
They forced the sea a sea-league back. They died, and their work stood fast.
We were born to peace in the lee of the dykes, but the time of our peace is past.

Far off, the full tide clambers and slips, mouthing and testing all,
Nipping the flanks of the water-gates, baying along the wall;
Turning the shingle, returning the shingle, changing the set of the sand . . .
We are too far from the beach, men say, to know how the outworks stand.

So we come down, uneasy, to look; uneasily pacing
the beach.
These are the dykes our fathers made: we have never
known a breach.
Time and again has the gale blown by and we were
not afraid;
Now we come only to look at the dykes—at the dykes
our fathers made.

On the marsh where the homesteads cower apart the
harried sunlight flies,
Shifts and considers, wanes and recovers, scatters and
sickens and dies—
An evil ember bedded in ash—a spark blown west by
the wind . . .
We are surrendered to night and the sea—the gale and
the tide behind!

At the bridge of the lower saltings the cattle gather
and blare,
Roused by the feet of running men, dazed by the
lantern-glare.
Unbar and let them away for their lives—the levels
drown as they stand,
Where the flood-wash forces the sluices aback and the
ditches deliver inland.

Ninefold deep to the top of the dykes the galloping
breakers stride,
And their overcarried spray is a sea—a sea on the
landward side.

Coming, like stallions they paw with their hooves,
going they snatch with their teeth,
Till the bents and the furze and the sand are dragged
out, and the old-time hurdles beneath!

Bid men gather fuel for fire, the tar, the oil, and the
tow—
Flame we shall need, not smoke, in the dark if the
riddled sea-banks go.
Bid the ringers watch in the tower (who knows how
the dawn shall prove?)
Each with his rope between his feet and the trembling
bells above.

Now we can only wait till the day, wait and appor-
tion our shame.
These are the dykes our fathers left, but we would not
look to the same.
Time and again were we warned of the dykes, time
and again we delayed:
Now, it may fall, we have slain our sons, as our fathers
we have betrayed.

. . . . . .

Walking along the wreck of the dykes, watching the
work of the seas!
These were the dykes our fathers made to our great
profit and ease.
But the peace is gone and the profit is gone, with the
old sure days withdrawn . . .
That our own houses show as strange when we come
back in the dawn!

THE SONG OF DIEGO VALDEZ

1902

THE God of Fair Beginnings
  Hath prospered here my hand—
The cargoes of my lading,
  And the keels of my command.
For out of many ventures
  That sailed with hope as high,
My own have made the better trade,
  And Admiral am I!

To me my King's much honour,
  To me my people's love—
To me the pride of Princes
  And power all pride above;
To me the shouting cities,
  To me the mob's refrain:—
'Who knows not noble Valdez,
  Hath never heard of Spain.'

But I remember comrades—
  Old playmates on new seas—
Whenas we traded orpiment
  Among the savages—
A thousand leagues to south'ard
  And thirty years removed—
They knew not noble Valdez,
  But me they knew and loved.

Then they that found good liquor,
They drank it not alone,
And they that found fair plunder,
They told us every one,
About our chosen islands
Or secret shoals between,
When, weary from far voyage,
We gathered to careen.

There burned our breaming-faggots
All pale along the shore:
There rose our worn pavilions—
A sail above an oar:
As flashed each yearning anchor
Through mellow seas afire,
So swift our careless captains
Rowed each to his desire.

Where lay our loosened harness?
Where turned our naked feet?
Whose tavern 'mid the palm-trees?
What quenchings of what heat?
Oh, fountain in the desert!
Oh, cistern in the waste!
Oh, bread we ate in secret!
Oh, cup we spilled in haste!

The youth new-taught of longing,
The widow curbed and wan,
The goodwife proud at season,
And the maid aware of man—
All souls unslaked, consuming,

Defrauded in delays,
Desire not more their quittance
Than I those forfeit days!

I dreamed, to wait my pleasure,
Unchanged my spring would bide:
Wherefore, to wait my pleasure,
I put my spring aside
Till, first in face of Fortune,
And last in mazed disdain,
I made Diego Valdez
High Admiral of Spain.

Then walked no wind 'neath Heaven
Nor surge that did not aid—
I dared extreme occasion,
Nor ever one betrayed.
They wrought a deeper treason—
(Led seas that served my needs!)
They sold Diego Valdez
To bondage of great deeds.

The tempest flung me seaward,
And pinned and bade me hold
The course I might not alter—
And men esteemed me bold!
The calms embayed my quarry,
The fog-wreath sealed his eyes;
The dawn-wind brought my topsails—
And men esteemed me wise!

Yet 'spite my tyrant triumphs,
Bewildered, dispossessed—

My dream held I before me—
  My vision of my rest;
But, crowned by Fleet and People,
  And bound by King and Pope—
Stands here Diego Valdez
  To rob me of my hope.

No prayer of mine shall move him,
  No word of his set free
The Lord of Sixty Pennants
  And the Steward of the Sea.
His will can loose ten thousand
  To seek their loves again—
But not Diego Valdez,
  High Admiral of Spain.

There walks no wind 'neath Heaven
  Nor wave that shall restore
The old careening riot
  And the clamorous, crowded shore-
The fountain in the desert,
  The cistern in the waste,
The bread we ate in secret,
  The cup we spilled in haste.

Now call I to my Captains—
  For council fly the sign—
Now leap their zealous galleys,
  Twelve-oared, across the brine.
To me the straiter prison,
  To me the heavier chain—
To me Diego Valdez,
  High Admiral of Spain!

THE BROKEN MEN

1902

For things we never mention,
  For Art misunderstood—
For excellent intention
  That did not turn to good;
From ancient tales' renewing,
  From clouds we would not clear-
Beyond the Law's pursuing
  We fled, and settled here.

We took no tearful leaving,
  We bade no long good-byes.
Men talked of crime and thieving,
  Men wrote of fraud and lies.
To save our injured feelings
  'Twas time and time to go—
Behind was dock and Dartmoor,
  Ahead lay Callao!

The widow and the orphan
  That pray for ten per cent.,
They clapped their trailers on us
  To spy the road we went.
They watched the foreign sailings
  (They scan the shipping still),
And that's your Christian people
  Returning good for ill!

God bless the thoughtful islands
  Where never warrants come;
God bless the just Republics
  That give a man a home,
That ask no foolish questions,
  But set him on his feet;
And save his wife and daughters
  From the workhouse and the street!

On church and square and market
  The noonday silence falls;
You'll hear the drowsy mutter
  Of the fountain in our halls.
Asleep amid the yuccas
  The city takes her ease—
Till twilight brings the land-wind
  To the clicking jalousies.

Day-long the diamond weather,
  The high, unaltered blue—
The smell of goats and incense
  And the mule-bells tinkling through.
Day-long the warder ocean
  That keeps us from our kin,
And once a month our levee
  When the English mail comes in.

You'll find us up and waiting
  To treat you at the bar;
You'll find us less exclusive
  Than the average English are.
We'll meet you with a carriage,

Too glad to show you round,
But—we do not lunch on steamers,
For they are English ground.

We sail o' nights to England
And join our smiling Boards—
Our wives go in with Viscounts
And our daughters dance with Lords,
But behind our princely doings,
And behind each coup we make,
We feel there's Something Waiting,
And—we meet It when we wake.

Ah, God! One sniff of England—
To greet our flesh and blood—
To hear the traffic slurring
Once more through London mud!
Our towns of wasted honour—
Our streets of lost delight! . . .
How stands the old 'Lord Warden'?
Are Dover's cliffs still white?

THE FEET OF THE YOUNG MEN

1897

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened, now the Hunting Winds are loose—
Now the Smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain;
Now the Young Men's hearts are troubled for the whisper of the Trues,
Now the Red Gods make their medicine again!
Who hath seen the beaver busied? Who hath watched the black-tail mating?
Who hath lain alone to hear the wild-goose cry?
Who hath worked the chosen water where the ouananiche is waiting,
Or the sea-trout's jumping-crazy for the fly?

He must go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world he's overdue.
'Send your road is clear before you when the old
Spring-fret comes o'er you
And the Red Gods call for you!

So for one the wet sail arching through the rainbow round the bow,
And for one the creak of snow-shoes on the crust;
And for one the lakeside lilies where the bull-moose waits the cow,
And for one the mule-train coughing in the dust.
Who hath smelt wood-smoke at twilight? Who hath heard the birch-log burning?

Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others, for the Young Men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and known delight!

Let him go—go, etc.

I

Do you know the blackened timber—do you know that racing stream
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end;
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle where a man may bask and dream
To the click of shod canoe-poles round the bend;
It is there that we are going with our rods and reels and traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock, with the star-light on our faces,
For the Red Gods call us out and we must go!

They must go—go, etc.

II

Do you know the shallow Baltic where the seas are steep and short,
Where the bluff, lee-boarded fishing-luggers ride?
Do you know the joy of threshing leagues to leeward of your port
On a coast you've lost the chart of overside?
It is there that I am going, with an extra hand to bale her—

Just one able 'long-shore loafer that I know.
He can take his chance of drowning, while I sail and sail and sail her,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

III

Do you know the pile-built village where the sago-dealers trade—
Do you know the reek of fish and wet bamboo?
Do you know the steaming stillness of the orchid-scented glade
When the blazoned, bird-winged butterflies flap through?
It is there that I am going with my camphor, net, and boxes,
To a gentle, yellow pirate that I know—
To my little wailing lemurs, to my palms and flying-foxes,
For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

IV

Do you know the world's white roof-tree—do you know that windy rift
Where the baffling mountain-eddies chop and change?
Do you know the long day's patience, belly-down on frozen drift,
While the head of heads is feeding out of range?

It is there that I am going, where the boulders and the snow lie,
With a trusty, nimble tracker that I know.
I have sworn an oath, to keep it on the Horns of Ovis Poli,
And the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

He must go—go, etc.

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened—now the Smokes of Council rise—
Pleasant smokes, ere yet 'twixt trail and trail they choose—
Now the girths and ropes are tested: now they pack their last supplies:
Now our Young Men go to dance before the Trues!
Who shall meet them at those altars—who shall light them to that shrine?
Velvet-footed, who shall guide them to their goal?
Unto each the voice and vision: unto each his spoor and sign—
Lonely mountain in the Northland, misty sweat-bath 'neath the Line—
And to each a man that knows his naked soul!

White or yellow, black or copper, he is waiting, as a lover,
Smoke of funnel, dust of hooves, or beat of train—
Where the high grass hides the horseman or the glaring flats discover—
Where the steamer hails the landing, or the surf-boat brings the rover—

Where the rails run out in sand-drift . . . Quick! ah,
heave the camp-kit over!
For the Red Gods make their medicine again!

And we go—go—go away from here!
On the other side the world we're overdue!
'Send the road is clear before you when the old
Spring-fret comes o'er you,
And the Red Gods call for you!

THE TRUCE OF THE BEAR

1898

YEARLY, with tent and rifle, our careless white men go
By the Pass called Muttianee, to shoot in the valley below.
Yearly by Muttianee he follows our white men in—
Matun, the old blind beggar, bandaged from brow to chin.

Eyeless, noseless, and lipless—toothless, broken of speech,
Seeking a dole at the doorway he mumbles his tale to each;
Over and over the story, ending as he began:
'Make ye no truce with Adam-zad—the Bear that walks like a Man!

There was a flint in my musket—pricked and primed was the pan,
When I went hunting Adam-zad—the Bear that stands like a Man.
I looked my last on the timber, I looked my last on the snow,
When I went hunting Adam-zad fifty summers ago!

I knew his times and his seasons, as he knew mine, that fed
By night in the ripened maizefield and robbed my house of bread.

I knew his strength and cunning, as he knew mine, that crept
At dawn to the crowded goat-pens and plundered while I slept.

Up from his stony playground—down from his well-digged lair—
Out on the naked ridges ran Adam-zad the Bear—
Groaning, grunting, and roaring, heavy with stolen meals,
Two long marches to northward, and I was at his heels!

Two full marches to northward, at the fall of the second night,
I came on mine enemy Adam-zad all panting from his flight.
There was a charge in the musket—pricked and primed was the pan—
My finger crooked on the trigger—when he reared up like a man.

Horrible, hairy, human, with paws like hands in prayer,
Making his supplication rose Adam-zad the Bear.
I looked at the swaying shoulders, at the paunch's swag and swing,
And my heart was touched with pity for the monstrous, pleading thing.

Touched with pity and wonder, I did not fire then . . .
I have looked no more on women—I have walked no more with men.

Nearer he tottered and nearer, with paws like hands that pray—
From brow to jaw that steel-shod paw, it ripped my face away!

Sudden, silent, and savage, searing as flame the blow—
Faceless I fell before his feet, fifty summers ago.
I heard him grunt and chuckle—I heard him pass to his den.
He left me blind to the darkened years and the little mercy of men.

Now ye go down in the morning with guns of the newer style,
That load (I have felt) in the middle and range (I have heard) a mile?
Luck to the white man's rifle, that shoots so fast and true,
But—pay, and I lift my bandage and show what the Bear can do!'

(Flesh like slag in the furnace, knobbed and withered and grey—
Matun, the old blind beggar, he gives good worth for his pay.)
'Rouse him at noon in the bushes, follow and press him hard—
Not for his ragings and roarings flinch ye from Adam-zad.

But (pay, and I put back the bandage) *this* is the time to fear,

When he stands up like a tired man, tottering near and near;
When he stands up as pleading, in wavering, man-brute guise,
When he veils the hate and cunning of his little, swinish eyes;

When he shows as seeking quarter, with paws like hands in prayer,
That is the time of peril—the time of the Truce of the Bear!'

Eyeless, noseless, and lipless, asking a dole at the door,
Matun, the old blind beggar, he tells it o'er and o'er;
Fumbling and feeling the rifles, warming his hands at the flame,
Hearing our careless white men talk of the morrow's game;

Over and over the story, ending as he began:—
'*There is no truce with Adam-zad, the Bear that looks like a Man!*'

THE OLD MEN

1902

THIS is our lot if we live so long and labour unto the end –
That we outlive the impatient years and the much too patient friend:
And because we know we have breath in our mouth and think we have thoughts in our head,
We shall assume that we are alive, whereas we are really dead.

We shall not acknowledge that old stars fade or stronger planets arise
(That the sere bush buds or the desert blooms or the ancient well-head dries),
Or any new compass wherewith new men adventure 'neath new skies.

We shall lift up the ropes that constrained our youth, to bind on our children's hands;
We shall call to the water below the bridges to return and replenish our lands;
We shall harness horses (Death's own pale horses) and scholarly plough the sands.

We shall lie down in the eye of the sun for lack of a light on our way—
We shall rise up when the day is done and chirrup, 'Behold, it is day!'
We shall abide till the battle is won ere we amble into the fray.

We shall peck out and discuss and dissect, and evert
and extrude to our mind,
The flaccid tissues of long-dead issues offensive to God
and mankind—
(Precisely like vultures over an ox that the Army has
left behind).

We shall make walk preposterous ghosts of the glories
we once created—
Immodestly smearing from muddled palettes amazing
pigments mismated—
And our friends will weep when we ask them with
boasts if our natural force be abated.

The Lamp of our Youth will be utterly out, but we
shall subsist on the smell of it;
And whatever we do, we shall fold our hands and suck
our gums and think well of it.
Yes, we shall be perfectly pleased with our work, and
that is the Perfectest Hell of it!

*This is our lot if we live so long and listen to those who
love us—*
*That we are shunned by the people about and shamed by
the Powers above us.*
*Wherefore be free of your harness betimes; but, being free,
be assured*
*That he who has not endured to the death, from his birth
he has never endured!*

THE EXPLORER

1898

'THERE's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation,'
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop:

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so:
'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!'

So I went, worn out of patience; never told my nearest neighbours—
Stole away with pack and ponies—left 'em drinking in the town;
And the faith that moveth mountains didn't seem to help my labours
As I faced the sheer main-ranges, whipping up and leading down.

March by march I puzzled through 'em, turning flanks and dodging shoulders,
Hurried on in hope of water, headed back for lack of grass;
Till I camped above the tree-line—drifted snow and naked boulders—
Felt free air astir to windward—knew I'd stumbled on the Pass.

'Thought to name it for the finder: but that night the Norther found me—
Froze and killed the plains-bred ponies; so I called the camp Despair
(It's the Railway Gap to-day, though). Then my Whisper waked to hound me:—
'Something lost behind the Ranges. Over yonder! Go you there!'

Then I knew, the while I doubted—knew His Hand was certain o'er me.
Still—it might be self-delusion—scores of better men had died—
I could reach the township living, but . . . He knows what terrors tore me . . .
But I didn't . . . but I didn't. I went down the other side.

Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned to aloes,
And the aloes sprung to thickets and a brimming stream ran by;
But the thickets dwined to thorn-scrub, and the water drained to shallows—

And I dropped again on desert—blasted earth, and
blasting sky. . . .

I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by 'em;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices, through
the smoke;
I remember they were fancy—for I threw a stone to
try 'em.
'Something lost behind the Ranges' was the only
word they spoke.

I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
'Very full of dreams that desert, but my two legs took
me through it . .
And I used to watch 'em moving with the toes all
black and raw.

But at last the country altered—White Man's country
past disputing—
Rolling grass and open timber, with a hint of hills
behind—
There I found me food and water, and I lay a week
recruiting.
'Got my strength and lost my nightmares. Then I
entered on my find.

Thence I ran my first rough survey—chose my trees
and blazed and ringed 'em—
Week by week I pried and sampled—week by week
my findings grew.
Saul he went to look for donkeys, and by God he
found a kingdom!

But by God, Who sent His Whisper, I had struck
the worth of two!

Up along the hostile mountains, where the hair-poised
snow-slide shivers—
Down and through the big fat marshes that the
virgin ore-bed stains,
Till I heard the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined
rivers,
And beyond the nameless timber saw illimitable
plains!

'Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades
between 'em;
'Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand
head an hour;
'Counted leagues of water-frontage through the axe-
ripe woods that screen 'em—
'Saw the plant to feed a people—up and waiting for
the power!

Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever
chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—never knew my
desert-fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-
holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. *They*'ll be called
the Pioneers!

They will find my sites of townships—not the cities
that I set there.

They will rediscover rivers—not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright.

Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
Have I kept one single nugget—(barring samples)? No, not I!
Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

Ores you'll find there; wood and cattle; water-transit sure and steady
(That should keep the railway-rates down), coal and iron at your doors.
God took care to hide that country till He judged His people ready,
Then He chose me for His Whisper, and I've found it, and it's yours!

Yes, your 'Never-never country'—yes, your 'edge of cultivation'
And 'no sense in going further'—till I crossed the range to see.
God forgive me! No, *I* didn't. It's God's present to our nation.
Anybody might have found it, but—His Whisper came to Me!

THE WAGE-SLAVES

1902

Oh, glorious are the guarded heights
  Where guardian souls abide—
Self-exiled from our gross delights—
  Above, beyond, outside:
An ampler arc their spirit swings—
  Commands a juster view—
We have their word for all these things,
  Nor doubt their words are true.

Yet we, the bondslaves of our day,
  Whom dirt and danger press—
Co-heirs of insolence, delay,
  And leagued unfaithfulness—
Such is our need, must seek indeed
  And, having found, engage
The men who merely do the work
  For which they draw the wage.

From forge and farm and mine and bench,
  Deck, altar, outpost lone—
Mill, school, battalion, counter, trench,
  Rail, senate, sheepfold, throne—
Creation's cry goes up on high
  From age to cheated age:
'Send us the men who do the work
  For which they draw the wage!'

Words cannot help nor wit achieve,
  Nor e'en the all-gifted fool,
Too weak to enter, bide, or leave
  The lists he cannot rule.
Beneath the sun we count on none
  Our evil to assuage,
Except the men that do the work
  For which they draw the wage.

When through the Gates of Stress and Strain
  Comes forth the vast Event—
The simple, sheer, sufficing, sane
  Result of labour spent—
They that have wrought the end unthought
  Be neither saint nor sage,
But only men who did the work
  For which they drew the wage.

Wherefore to these the Fates shall bend
  (And all old idle things),
Wherefore on these shall Power attend
  Beyond the grip of Kings:
Each in his place, by right, not grace,
  Shall rule his heritage—
The men who simply do the work
  For which they draw the wage

Not such as scorn the loitering street,
  Or waste, to earn its praise,
Their noontide's unreturning heat
  About their morning ways:

But such as dower each mortgaged hour
  Alike with clean courage—
Even the men who do the work
  For which they draw the wage—
Men, like to Gods, that do the work
  For which they draw the wage—
Begin—continue—close that work
  For which they draw the wage!

THE BURIAL

1902

C. J. RHODES

(Buried in the Matoppos, April 10, 1902)

WHEN that great Kings return to clay,
  Or Emperors in their pride,
Grief of a day shall fill a day,
  Because its creature died.
But we—we reckon not with those
  Whom the mere Fates ordain,
This Power that wrought on us and goes
  Back to the Power again.

Dreamer devout, by vision led
  Beyond our guess or reach,
The travail of his spirit bred
  Cities in place of speech.
So huge the all-mastering thought that drove—
  So brief the term allowed—
Nations, not words, he linked to prove
  His faith before the crowd.

It is his will that he look forth
  Across the world he won—
The granite of the ancient North—
  Great spaces washed with sun.

There shall he patient take his seat
  (As when the Death he dared),
And there await a people's feet
  In the paths that he prepared.

There, till the vision he foresaw
  Splendid and whole arise,
And unimagined Empires draw
  To council 'neath the skies,
The immense and brooding Spirit still
  Shall quicken and control.
Living he was the land, and dead,
  His soul shall be her soul!

GENERAL JOUBERT

1900

(Died, South African War, March 27, 1900)

WITH those that bred, with those that loosed the strife
He had no part whose hands were clear of gain;
But subtle, strong, and stubborn, gave his life
To a lost cause, and knew the gift was vain.

Later shall rise a people, sane and great,
Forged in strong fires, by equal war made one;
Telling old battles over without hate—
Not least his name shall pass from sire to son.

He may not meet the onsweep of our van
In the doomed city when we close the score;
Yet o'er his grave—his grave that holds a Man—
Our deep-tongued guns shall answer his once more!

THE PALACE

1902

WHEN I was a King and a Mason—a Master proven and skilled—
I cleared me ground for a Palace such as a King should build.
I decreed and dug down to my levels. Presently, under the silt,
I came on the wreck of a Palace such as a King had built.

There was no worth in the fashion—there was no wit in the plan—
Hither and thither, aimless, the ruined footings ran—
Masonry, brute, mishandled, but carven on every stone:
'*After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known.*'

Swift to my use in my trenches, where my well-planned ground-works grew,
I tumbled his quoins and his ashlars, and cut and reset them anew.
Limes I milled of his marble; burned it, slacked it, and spread;
Taking and leaving at pleasure the gifts of the humble dead.

Yet I despised not nor gloried; yet, as we wrenched them apart,
I read in the razed foundations the heart of that builder's heart.

As he had risen and pleaded, so did I understand
The form of the dream he had followed in the face
of the thing he had planned.

. . . . . .

When I was a King and a Mason—in the open noon
of my pride,
They sent me a Word from the Darkness. They whis-
pered and called me aside.
They said—'The end is forbidden.' They said—'Thy
use is fulfilled.
Thy Palace shall stand as that other's—the spoil of a
King who shall build.'

I called my men from my trenches, my quarries, my
wharves, and my sheers.
All I had wrought I abandoned to the faith of the faith-
less years.
Only I cut on the timber—only I carved on the stone:
'*After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known!*'

SUSSEX

1902

GOD gave all men all earth to love,
But, since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should prove
Belovèd over all;
That, as He watched Creation's birth,
So we, in godlike mood,
May of our love create our earth
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,
As one some Surrey glade,
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament
Before Levuka's Trade.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,
No bosomed woods adorn
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
But gnarled and writhen thorn—
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,
And, through the gaps revealed,
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,
  Half-wild and wholly tame,
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff-edge
  As when the Romans came.
What sign of those that fought and died
  At shift of sword and sword?
The barrow and the camp abide,
  The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west
  All heavy-winged with brine,
Here lies above the folded crest
  The Channel's leaden line;
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
  And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
  Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight
  Our broad and brookless vales—
Only the dewpond on the height
  Unfed, that never fails—
Whereby no tattered herbage tells
  Which way the season flies—
Only our close-bit thyme that smells
  Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong and shadeless days
  The tinkling silence thrills;
Or little, lost, Down churches praise
  The Lord who made the hills:

But here the Old Gods guard their round,
  And, in her secret heart,
The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found
  Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,
  With equal soul I'd see
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,
  Yet none more fair than she.
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,
  And I will choose instead
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,
  Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun
  Where the rolled scarp retires,
And the Long Man of Wilmington
  Looks naked toward the shires;
And east till doubling Rother crawls
  To find the fickle tide,
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,
  Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws
  And the deep ghylls that breed
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold
  No more than 'Sussex weed';
Or south where windy Piddinghoe's
  Begilded dolphin veers,
And red beside wide-bankèd Ouse
  Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give
  Till the sure magic strike,
And Memory, Use, and Love make live
  Us and our fields alike—
That deeper than our speech and thought,
  Beyond our reason's sway,
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought
  Yearns to its fellow-clay.

God gives all men all earth to love,
  But, since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
  Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
  The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
  Yea, Sussex by the sea!

SONG OF THE WISE CHILDREN

1902

When the darkened Fifties dip to the North,
And frost and the fog divide the air,
And the day is dead at his breaking-forth,
Sirs, it is bitter beneath the Bear!

Far to Southward they wheel and glance,
The million molten spears of morn—
The spears of our deliverance
That shine on the house where we were born.

Flying-fish about our bows,
Flying sea-fires in our wake:
This is the road to our Father's House,
Whither we go for our souls' sake!

We have forfeited our birthright,
We have forsaken all things meet;
We have forgotten the look of light,
We have forgotten the scent of heat.

They that walk with shaded brows,
Year by year in a shining land,
They be men of our Father's House,
They shall receive us and understand.

We shall go back by the boltless doors,
To the life unaltered our childhood knew-

SONG OF THE WISE CHILDREN

To the naked feet on the cool, dark floors,
  And the high-ceiled rooms that the Trade blows
    through:

To the trumpet-flowers and the moon beyond,
  And the tree-toads' chorus drowning all—
And the lisp of the split banana-frond
  That talked us to sleep when we were small.

The wayside magic, the threshold spells,
  Shall soon undo what the North has done—
Because of the sights and the sounds and the smells
  That ran with our youth in the eye of the sun!

And Earth accepting shall ask no vows,
  Nor the Sea our love, nor our lover the Sky.
When we return to our Father's House
  Only the English shall wonder why!

BUDDHA AT KAMAKURA

1892

'And there is a Japanese idol at Kamakura.'

O YE who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when 'the heathen' pray
To Buddha at Kamakura!

To Him the Way, the Law, apart,
Whom Maya held beneath her heart,
Ananda's Lord, the Bodhisat,
The Buddha of Kamakura.

For though He neither burns nor sees,
Nor hears ye thank your Deities,
Ye have not sinned with such as these,
His children at Kamakura,

Yet spare us still the Western joke
When joss-sticks turn to scented smoke
The little sins of little folk
That worship at Kamakura—

The grey-robed, gay-sashed butterflies
That flit beneath the Master's eyes.
He is beyond the Mysteries
But loves them at Kamakura.

And whoso will, from Pride released,
Contemning neither creed nor priest,

May feel the Soul of all the East
About him at Kamakura.

Yea, every tale Ananda heard,
Of birth as fish or beast or bird,
While yet in lives the Master stirred,
The warm wind brings Kamakura.

Till drowsy eyelids seem to see
A-flower 'neath her golden *htee*
The Shwe-Dagon flare easterly
From Burma to Kamakura,

And down the loaded air there comes
The thunder of Tibetan drums,
And droned—'*Om mane padme hum*'s' [1]—
A world's-width from Kamakura.

Yet Brahmans rule Benares still,
Buddh-Gaya's ruins pit the hill,
And beef-fed zealots threaten ill
To Buddha and Kamakura.

A tourist-show, a legend told,
A rusting bulk of bronze and gold,
So much, and scarce so much, ye hold
The meaning of Kamakura?

But when the morning prayer is prayed,
Think, ere ye pass to strife and trade,
Is God in human image made
No nearer than Kamakura?

[1] The Buddhist invocation.

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

1899

(THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS)

TAKE up the White Man's burden—
  Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
  To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
  On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
  Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
  In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
  And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
  An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
  And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
  The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
  And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
  The end for others sought,

Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
  Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
  No tawdry rule of Kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
  The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
  The roads ye shall not tread,
Go, make them with your living,
  And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man's burden—
  And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
  The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
  (Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
'Why brought ye us from bondage,
  Our loved Egyptian night?'

Take up the White Man's burden—
  Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
  To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
  By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
  Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
  Have done with childish days—

The lightly proffered laurel,
  The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
  Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
  The judgment of your peers!

PHARAOH AND THE SERGEANT

1897

'. . . consider that the meritorious services of the Sergeant Instructors attached to the Egyptian Army have been inadequately acknowledged. . . . To the excellence of their work is mainly due the great improvement that has taken place in the soldiers of H.H. the Khedive.'—*Extract from Letter.*

SAID England unto Pharaoh, 'I must make a man of you,
That will stand upon his feet and play the game,
That will Maxim his oppressor as a Christian ought to do,'
And she sent old Pharaoh Sergeant Whatsisname.
It was not a Duke nor Earl, nor yet a *Vis*count—
It was not a big brass General that came;
But a man in khaki kit who could handle men a bit,
With his bedding labelled Sergeant Whatsisname.

Said England unto Pharaoh, 'Though at present singing small,
You shall hum a proper tune before it ends,'
And she introduced old Pharaoh to the Sergeant once for all,
And left 'em in the desert making friends.
It was not a Crystal Palace nor Cathedral;
It was not a public-house of common fame;

But a piece of red-hot sand, with a palm on either hand,
And a little hut for Sergeant Whatsisname.

Said England unto Pharaoh, 'You've had miracles before,
When Aaron struck your rivers into blood;
But if you watch the Sergeant he can show you something more.
He's a charm for making riflemen from mud.'
It was neither Hindustani, French, nor Coptics;
It was odds and ends and leavings of the same,
Translated by a stick (which is really half the trick),
And Pharaoh harked to Sergeant Whatsisname.

(There were years that no one talked of; there were times of horrid doubt—
There was faith and hope and whacking and despair—
While the Sergeant gave the Cautions and he combed old Pharaoh out,
And England didn't seem to know nor care.
That is England's awful way o' doing business—
She would serve her God (or Gordon) just the same—
For she thinks her Empire still is the Strand and Holborn Hill,
And she didn't think of Sergeant Whatsisname.)

Said England to the Sergeant, 'You can let my people go!'
(England used 'em cheap and nasty from the start),
And they entered 'em in battle on a most astonished foe—

But the Sergeant he had hardened Pharaoh's heart
Which was broke, along of all the plagues of Egypt,
Three thousand years before the Sergeant came—
And he mended it again in a little more than ten,
Till Pharaoh fought like Sergeant Whatsisname.

It was wicked bad campaigning (cheap and nasty from the first),
There was heat and dust and coolie-work and sun,
There were vipers, flies, and sandstorms, there was cholera and thirst,
But Pharaoh done the best he ever done.
Down the desert, down the railway, down the river,
Like the Israelites from bondage so he came,
'Tween the clouds o' dust and fire to the land of his desire,
And his Moses, it was Sergeant Whatsisname!

We are eating dirt in handfuls for to save our daily bread,
Which we have to buy from those that hate us most,
And we must not raise the money where the Sergeant raised the dead,
And it's wrong and bad and dangerous to boast.
But he did it on the cheap and on the quiet,
And he's not allowed to forward any claim—
Though he drilled a black man white, though he made a mummy fight,

He will still continue Sergeant Whatsisname—
Private, Corporal, Colour-Sergeant, and In-
structor—
But the everlasting miracle's the same!

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

1897

(CANADIAN PREFERENTIAL TARIFF, 1897)

A NATION spoke to a Nation,
A Queen sent word to a Throne:
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I set my house in order,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Neither with laughter nor weeping,
Fear or the child's amaze—
Soberly under the White Man's law
My white men go their ways.
Not for the Gentiles' clamour—
Insult or threat of blows—
Bow we the knee to Baal,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'My speech is clean and single,
I talk of common things—
Words of the wharf and the market-place
And the ware the merchant brings:
Favour to those I favour,
But a stumbling-block to my foes.
Many there be that hate us,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'I called my chiefs to council
In the din of a troubled year;
For the sake of a sign ye would not see,
And a word ye would not hear.
This is our message and answer;
This is the path we chose:
For we be also a People,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Carry the word to my sisters—
To the Queens of the East and the South.
I have proven faith in the Heritage
By more than the word of the mouth.
They that are wise may follow
Ere the world's war-trumpet blows,
But I—I am first in the battle,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

A Nation spoke to a Nation,
A Throne sent word to a Throne:
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close,
And I abide by my Mother's House,'
Said our Lady of the Snows.

ET DONA FERENTES

1896

In extended observation of the ways and works of man,
From the Four-mile Radius roughly to the Plains of Hindustan:
I have drunk with mixed assemblies, seen the racial ruction rise,
And the men of half Creation damning half Creation's eyes.

I have watched them in their tantrums, all that pentecostal crew,
French, Italian, Arab, Spaniard, Dutch and Greek, and Russ and Jew,
Celt and savage, buff and ochre, cream and yellow, mauve and white,
But it never really mattered till the English grew polite;

Till the men with polished toppers, till the men in long frock-coats,
Till the men who do not duel, till the men who fight with votes,
Till the breed that take their pleasures as Saint Lawrence took his grid,
Began to 'beg your pardon' and—the knowing croupier hid.

Then the bandsmen with their fiddles, and the girls that bring the beer,

Felt the psychological moment, left the lit Casino clear;
But the uninstructed alien, from the Teuton to the Gaul,
Was entrapped, once more, my Country, by that suave, deceptive drawl.

. . . . . .

As it was in ancient Suez or 'neath wilder, milder skies,
I 'observe with apprehension' how the racial ructions rise;
And with keener apprehension, if I read the times aright,
Hear the old Casino order: 'Watch your man, but be polite.

Keep your temper. Never answer (*that* was why they spat and swore).
Don't hit first, but move together (there's no hurry) to the door.
Back to back, and facing outward while the linguist tells 'em how—
"*Nous sommes allong ar note batteau, nous ne voulong par un row.*" '

So the hard, pent rage ate inward, till some idiot went too far . . .
'Let 'em have it!' and they had it, and the same was merry war—
Fist, umbrella, cane, decanter, lamp and beer-mug, chair and boot—
Till behind the fleeing legions rose the long, hoarse yell for loot.

Then the oil-cloth with its numbers, like a banner fluttered free;
Then the grand piano cantered, on three castors, down the quay;
White, and breathing through their nostrils, silent, systematic, swift—
They removed, effaced, abolished all that man could heave or lift.

Oh, my Country, bless the training that from cot to castle runs—
The pitfall of the stranger but the bulwark of thy sons—
Measured speech and ordered action, sluggish soul and unperturbed,
Till we wake our Island-Devil—nowise cool for being curbed!

When the heir of all the ages 'has the honour to remain,'
When he will not hear an insult, though men make it ne'er so plain,
When his lips are schooled to meekness, when his back is bowed to blows—
Well the keen *aas-vogels* know it—well the waiting jackal knows.

Build on the flank of Etna where the sullen smoke-puffs float—
Or bathe in tropic waters where the lean fin dogs the boat—
Cock the gun that is not loaded, cook the frozen dynamite—
But oh, beware my Country, when my Country grows polite!

KITCHENER'S SCHOOL

1898

Being a translation of the song that was made by a Mohammedan schoolmaster of Bengal Infantry (some time on service at Suakim) when he heard that Kitchener was taking money from the English to build a Madrissa for Hubshees—or a college for the Sudanese at Khartoum.

O HUBSHEE, carry your shoes in your hand and bow your head on your breast!
This is the message of Kitchener who did not break you in jest.
It was permitted to him to fulfil the long-appointed years;
Reaching the end ordained of old over your dead Emirs.

He stamped only before your walls, and the Tomb ye knew was dust:
He gathered up under his armpits all the swords of your trust:
He set a guard on your granaries, securing the weak from the strong:
He said:—'Go work the waterwheels that were abolished so long.'

He said:—'Go safely, being abased. I have accomplished my vow.'
That was the mercy of Kitchener. Cometh his madness now!
He does not desire as ye desire, nor devise as ye devise:

He is preparing a second host—an army to make you wise.

Not at the mouth of his clean-lipped guns shall ye learn his name again,
But letter by letter, from Kaf to Kaf, at the mouths of his chosen men.
He has gone back to his own city, not seeking presents or bribes,
But openly asking the English for money to buy you Hakims and scribes.

Knowing that ye are forfeit by battle and have no right to live,
He begs for money to bring you learning—and all the English give.
It is their treasure—it is their pleasure—thus are their hearts inclined:
For Allah created the English mad—the maddest of all mankind!

They do not consider the Meaning of Things; they consult not creed nor clan.
Behold, they clap the slave on the back, and behold, he ariseth a man!
They terribly carpet the earth with dead, and before their cannon cool,
They walk unarmed by twos and threes to call the living to school.

How is this reason (which is their reason) to judge a scholar's worth,
By casting a ball at three straight sticks and defending the same with a fourth?

But this they do (which is doubtless a spell) and other matters more strange,
Until, by the operation of years, the hearts of their scholars change:

Till these make come and go great boats or engines upon the rail
(But always the English watch near by to prop them when they fail);
Till these make laws of their own choice and Judges of their own blood;
And all the mad English obey the Judges and say that that Law is good.

Certainly they were mad from of old; but I think one new thing,
That the magic whereby they work their magic—wherefrom their fortunes spring—
May be that they show all peoples their magic and ask no price in return.
Wherefore, since ye are bond to that magic, O Hubshee, make haste and learn!

Certainly also is Kitchener mad. But one sure thing I know—
If he who broke you be minded to teach you, to his Madrissa go!
Go, and carry your shoes in your hand and bow your head on your breast,
For he who did not slay you in sport, he will not teach you in jest.

THE YOUNG QUEEN

1900

THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(Inaugurated New Year's Day, 1901)

HER hand was still on her sword-hilt, the spur was still on her heel,
She had not cast her harness of grey, war-dinted steel;
High on her red-splashed charger, beautiful, bold, and browned,
Bright-eyed out of the battle, the Young Queen rode to be crowned.

She came to the Old Queen's presence, in the Hall of Our Thousand Years—
In the Hall of the Five Free Nations that are peers among their peers:
Royal she gave the greeting, loyal she bowed the head,
Crying—'Crown me, my Mother!' And the Old Queen stood and said:—

'How can I crown thee further? I know whose standard flies
Where the clean surge takes the Leeuwin or the coral barriers rise.
Blood of our foes on thy bridle, and speech of our friends in thy mouth—
How can I crown thee further, O Queen of the Sovereign South?

Let the Five Free Nations witness!' But the Young
Queen answered swift:—
'It shall be crown of Our crowning to hold Our crown
for a gift.
In the days when Our folk were feeble thy sword
made sure Our lands:
Wherefore We come in power to take Our crown
at thy hands.'

And the Old Queen raised and kissed her, and the
jealous circlet prest,
Roped with the pearls of the Northland and red with
the gold of the West,
Lit with her land's own opals, levin-hearted, alive,
And the Five-starred Cross above them, for sign of
the Nations Five.

So it was done in the Presence—in the Hall of Our
Thousand Years,
In the face of the Five Free Nations that have no peer
but their peers;
And the Young Queen out of the Southland kneeled
down at the Old Queen's knee,
And asked for a mother's blessing on the excellent
years to be.

And the Old Queen stooped in the stillness where the
jewelled head drooped low:—
'Daughter no more but Sister, and doubly Daughter
so—
Mother of many princes—and child of the child I bore,

What good thing shall I wish thee that I have not
wished before?

Shall I give thee delight in dominion—mere pride of
thy setting forth?
Nay, we be women together—we know what that
lust is worth.
Peace in thy utmost borders, and strength on a road
untrod?
These are dealt or diminished at the secret will of
God.

I have swayed troublous councils, I am wise in terrible
things;
Father and son and grandson, I have known the hearts
of the Kings.
Shall I give thee my sleepless wisdom, or the gift all
wisdom above?
Ay, we be women together—I give thee thy People's
love:

Tempered, august, abiding, reluctant of prayers or
vows,
Eager in face of peril as thine for thy Mother's house.
God requite thee, my Sister, through the excellent
years to be,
And make thy People to love thee as thou hast lovèd
me!'

RIMMON

1903

(AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

DULY with knees that feign to quake
  Bent head and shaded brow,—
Yet once again, for my father's sake,
  In Rimmon's House I bow.

The curtains part, the trumpet blares,
  And the eunuchs howl aloud;
And the gilt, swag-bellied idol glares
  Insolent over the crowd.

'*This is Rimmon, Lord of the Earth—*
  Fear Him and bow the knee!'
And I watch my comrades hide their mirth
  That rode to the wars with me.

For we remember the sun and the sand
  And the rocks whereon we trod,
Ere we came to a scorched and a scornful land
  That did not know our God;

As we remember the sacrifice,
  Dead men an hundred laid—
Slain while they served His mysteries,
  And that He would not aid—

Not though we gashed ourselves and wept,
  For the high-priest bade us wait;
Saying He went on a journey or slept,
  Or was drunk or had taken a mate.

(*Praise ye Rimmon, King of Kings,*
  Who ruleth Earth and Sky!
And again I bow as the censer swings
  And the God Enthroned goes by.)

Ay, we remember His sacred ark
  And the virtuous men that knelt
To the dark and the hush behind the dark
  Wherein we dreamed He dwelt;

Until we entered to hale Him out,
  And found no more than an old
Uncleanly image girded about
  The loins with scarlet and gold.

Him we o'erset with the butts of our spears—
  Him and His vast designs—
To be the scorn of our muleteers
  And the jest of our halted lines.

By the picket-pins that the dogs defile,
  In the dung and the dust He lay,
Till the priests ran and chattered awhile
  And wiped Him and took Him away.

Hushing the matter before it was known,
  They returned to our fathers afar,

And hastily set Him afresh on His throne
  Because He had won us the war.

Wherefore with knees that feign to quake—
  Bent head and shaded brow—
To this dead dog, for my father's sake,
  In Rimmon's House I bow.

THE OLD ISSUE

(OUTBREAK OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, OCTOBER 9, 1899)

'HERE is nothing new nor aught unproven,' say the Trumpets,
'Many feet have worn it and the road is old indeed.
It is the King—the King we schooled aforetime!'
(Trumpets in the marshes—in the eyot at Runnymede!)

'Here is neither haste, nor hate, nor anger,' peal the Trumpets,
'Pardon for his penitence or pity for his fall.
It is the King!'—inexorable Trumpets—
(Trumpets round the scaffold at the dawning by Whitehall!)

. . . . . .

'He hath veiled the Crown and hid the Sceptre,' warn the Trumpets,
'He hath changed the fashion of the lies that cloak his will.
Hard die the Kings—ah, hard—dooms hard!' declare the Trumpets,—
(Trumpets at the gang-plank where the brawling troop-decks fill!)

Ancient and Unteachable, abide—abide the Trumpets!
Once again the Trumpets, for the shuddering ground-swell brings

Clamour over ocean of the harsh, pursuing Trumpets—
Trumpets of the Vanguard that have sworn no truce with Kings!

All we have of freedom, all we use or know—
This our fathers bought for us long and long ago.

Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we draw—
Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the Law—

Lance and torch and tumult, steel and grey-goose wing,
Wrenched it, inch and ell and all, slowly from the King.

Till our fathers 'stablished, after bloody years,
How our King is one with us, first among his peers.

So they bought us freedom—not at little cost—
Wherefore must we watch the King, lest our gain be lost.

Over all things certain, this is sure indeed,
Suffer not the old King: for we know the breed.

Give no ear to bondsmen bidding us endure,
Whining 'He is weak and far'; crying 'Time shall cure.'

(Time himself is witness, till the battle joins,
Deeper strikes the rottenness in the people's loins.)

Give no heed to bondsmen masking war with peace.
Suffer not the old King here or overseas.

They that beg us barter—wait his yielding mood—
Pledge the years we hold in trust—pawn our brother's
blood—

Howso great their clamour, whatsoe'er their claim,
Suffer not the old King under any name!

Here is naught unproven—here is naught to learn.
It is written what shall fall if the King return.

He shall mark our goings, question whence we came,
Set his guards about us, as in Freedom's name.

He shall take a tribute; toll of all our ware;
He shall change our gold for arms—arms we may not
bear.

He shall break his Judges if they cross his word;
He shall rule above the Law calling on the Lord.

He shall peep and mutter; and the night shall bring
Watchers 'neath our window, lest we mock the
King—

Hate and all division; hosts of hurrying spies;
Money poured in secret; carrion breeding flies.

Strangers of his council, hirelings of his pay,
These shall deal our Justice: sell—deny—delay.

We shall drink dishonour, we shall eat abuse
For the Land we look to—for the Tongue we use.

We shall take our station, dirt beneath his feet,
While his hired captains jeer us in the street.

Cruel in the shadow, crafty in the sun,
Far beyond his borders shall his teachings run.

Sloven, sullen, savage, secret, uncontrolled,
Laying on a new land evil of the old—

Long-forgotten bondage, dwarfing heart and brain—
All our fathers died to loose he shall bind again.

Here is naught at venture, random nor untrue—
Swings the wheel full-circle, brims the cup anew.

Here is naught unproven, here is nothing hid:
Step for step and word for word—so the old Kings did!

Step by step, and word by word: who is ruled may read.
Suffer not the old Kings: for we know the breed—

All the right they promise—all the wrong they bring.
Stewards of the Judgment, suffer not this King!

BRIDGE-GUARD IN THE KARROO

1901

'. . . and will supply details to guard the Blood River Bridge.'—*District Orders: Lines of Communication—South African War.*

SUDDEN the desert changes,
  The raw glare softens and clings,
Till the aching Oudtshoorn ranges
  Stand up like the thrones of Kings—

Ramparts of slaughter and peril—
  Blazing, amazing, aglow—
'Twixt the skyline's belting beryl
  And the wine-dark flats below.

Royal the pageant closes,
  Lit by the last of the sun—
Opal and ash-of-roses,
  Cinnamon, umber, and dun.

The twilight swallows the thicket,
  The starlight reveals the ridge.
The whistle shrills to the picket—
  We are changing guard on the bridge.

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
  Where the empty metals shine—

No, not combatants—only
  Details guarding the line.)

We slip through the broken panel
  Of fence by the ganger's shed;
We drop to the waterless channel
  And the lean track overhead;

We stumble on refuse of rations,
  The beef and the biscuit-tins;
We take our appointed stations,
  And the endless night begins.

We hear the Hottentot herders
  As the sheep click past to the fold—
And the click of the restless girders
  As the steel contracts in the cold—

Voices of jackals calling
  And, loud in the hush between,
A morsel of dry earth falling
  From the flanks of the scarred ravine.

And the solemn firmament marches,
  And the hosts of heaven rise
Framed through the iron arches—
  Banded and barred by the ties,

Till we feel the far track humming,
  And we see her headlight plain,
And we gather and wait her coming—
  The wonderful north-bound train.

(Few, forgotten and lonely,
  Where the white car-windows shine–
No, not combatants—only
  Details guarding the line.)

Quick, ere the gift escape us!
  Out of the darkness we reach
For a handful of week-old papers
  And a mouthful of human speech.

And the monstrous heaven rejoices,
  And the earth allows again
Meetings, greetings, and voices
  Of women talking with men.

So we return to our places,
  As out on the bridge she rolls;
And the darkness covers our faces,
  And the darkness re-enters our souls.

More than a little lonely
  Where the lessening tail-lights shine.
No, not combatants—only
  Details guarding the line!

THE LESSON

(SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899–1902)

LET us admit it fairly, as a business people should,
We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good.

Not on a single issue, or in one direction or twain,
But conclusively, comprehensively, and several times and again,
Were all our most holy illusions knocked higher than Gilderoy's kite.
We have had a jolly good lesson, and it serves us jolly well right!

This was not bestowèd us under the trees, nor yet in the shade of a tent,
But swingingly, over eleven degrees of a bare brown continent.
From Lamberts to Delagoa Bay, and from Pietersburg to Sutherland,
Fell the phenomenal lesson we learned—with a fullness accorded no other land.

It was our fault, and our very great fault, and *not* the judgment of Heaven.
We made an Army in our own image, on an island nine by seven,

Which faithfully mirrored its makers' ideals, equipment, and mental attitude—
And so we got our lesson: and we ought to accept it with gratitude.

We have spent two hundred million pounds to prove the fact once more,
That horses are quicker than men afoot, since two and two make four;
And horses have four legs, and men have two legs, and two into four goes twice,
And nothing over except our lesson—and very cheap at the price.

For remember (this our children shall know: we are too near for that knowledge)
Not our mere astonied camps, but Council and Creed and College—
All the obese, unchallenged old things that stifle and overlie us—
Have felt the effects of the lesson we got—an advantage no money could buy us!

Then let us develop this marvellous asset which we alone command,
And which, it may subsequently transpire, will be worth as much as the Rand.
Let us approach this pivotal fact in a humble yet hopeful mood—
We have had no end of a lesson. It will do us no end of good!

It was our fault, and our very great fault—and now
we must turn it to use:
We have forty million reasons for failure, but not a
single excuse.
So the more we work and the less we talk the better
results we shall get.
We have had an Imperial lesson. It may make us an
Empire yet!

THE FILES

1903

The Sub-editor speaks:—

FILES—
The Files—
Office Files!
Oblige me by referring to the Files.
Every question man can raise,
Every phrase of every phase
Of that question is on record in the Files—
(Thrashed out threadbare—fought and finished in the Files).
Ere the Universe at large
Was our new-tipped arrows' targe—
Ere we rediscovered Mammon and his wiles—
Faenza, gentle reader, spent her—five-and-twentieth leader—
(You will find him, and some others, in the Files).
Warn all coming Robert Brownings and Carlyles,
It will interest them to hunt among the Files
Where unvisited, a-cold,
Lie the crowded years of old
In that Kensal-Green of greatness called the Files
(In our newspaPère-la-Chaise the Office Files),
Where the dead men lay them down
Meekly sure of long renown,
And above them, sere and swift,
Packs the daily deepening drift
Of the all-recording, all-effacing Files—

The obliterating, automatic Files.
Count the mighty men who slung
Ink, Evangel, Sword, or Tongue
When Reform and you were young—
Made their boasts and spake according in the Files—
(Hear the ghosts that wake applauding in the Files!)
Trace each all-forgot career
From long primer through brevier
Unto Death, a para minion in the Files
(Para minion—solid—bottom of the Files). . . .
Some successful Kings and Queens adorn the Files.
They were great, their views were leaded,
And their deaths were triple-headed,
So they catch the eye in running through the Files
(Show as blazes in the mazes of the Files);
For their 'paramours and priests,'
And their gross, jack-booted feasts,
And their 'epoch-marking actions' see the Files.
Was it Bomba fled the blue Sicilian isles?
Was it Saffi, a professor
Once of Oxford, brought redress or
Garibaldi? Who remembers
Forty-odd-year-old Septembers?—
Only sextons paid to dig among the Files
(Such as I am, born and bred among the Files).
You must hack through much deposit
Ere you know for sure who was it
Came to burial with such honour in the Files
(Only seven seasons back beneath the Files).
'Very great our loss and grievous—
So our best and brightest leave us,
And it ends the Age of Giants,' say the Files;

All the '60—'70—'80—'90 Files
(The open-minded, opportunist Files—
The easy 'O King, live for ever' Files).
It is good to read a little in the Files;
'Tis a sure and sovereign balm
Unto philosophic calm,
Yea, and philosophic doubt when Life beguiles,
When you know Success is Greatness,
When you marvel at your lateness
In apprehending facts so plain to Smiles
(Self-helpful, wholly strenuous Samuel Smiles).
When your Imp of Blind Desire
Bids you set the Thames afire,
You'll remember men have done so—in the Files.
You'll have seen those flames transpire—in the
Files
(More than once that flood has run so—in the
Files).
When the Conchimarian horns
Of the reboantic Norns
Usher gentlemen and ladies
With new lights on Heaven and Hades,
Guaranteeing to Eternity
All yesterday's modernity;
When Brocken-spectres made by
Some one's breath on ink parade by,
Very earnest and tremendous,
Let not shows of shows offend us.
When of everything we like we
Shout ecstatic: *Quod ubique,*
Quod ab omnibus means *semper*!'
Oh, my brother, keep your temper!

Light your pipe and take a look along the Files.
You've a better chance to guess
At the meaning of Success
(Which is Greatness—*vide* Press)
When you've seen it in perspective in the Files!

THE REFORMERS

1901

Not in the camp his victory lies
Or triumph in the market-place,
Who is his Nation's sacrifice
To turn the judgment from his race.

Happy is he who, bred and taught
By sleek, sufficing Circumstance—
Whose Gospel was the apparelled thought
Whose Gods were Luxury and Chance—

Sees, on the threshold of his days,
The old life shrivel like a scroll,
And to unheralded dismays
Submits his body and his soul:

The fatted shows wherein he stood
Forgoing, and the idiot pride,
That he may prove with his own blood
All that his easy sires denied—

Ultimate issues, primal springs,
Demands, abasements, penalties—
The imperishable plinth of things
Seen and unseen, that touch our peace.

For, though ensnaring ritual dim
His vision through the after-years,

Yet virtue shall go out of him—
  Example profiting his peers.

With great things charged he shall not hold
  Aloof till great occasion rise,
But serve, full-harnessed, as of old,
  The Days that are the Destinies.

He shall forswear and put away
  The idols of his sheltered house;
And to Necessity shall pay
  Unflinching tribute of his vows.

He shall not plead another's act,
  Nor bind him in another's oath
To weigh the Word above the Fact,
  Or make or take excuse for sloth.

The yoke he bore shall press him still,
  And long-ingrainèd effort goad
To find, to fashion, and fulfil
  The cleaner life, the sterner code.

Not in the camp his victory lies—
  The world (unheeding his return)
Shall see it in his children's eyes
  And from his grandson's lips shall learn.

DIRGE OF DEAD SISTERS

1902

(FOR THE NURSES WHO DIED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

WHO recalls the twilight and the rangèd tents in order
(Violet peaks uplifted through the crystal evening air)
And the clink of iron teacups and the piteous, noble laughter,
And the faces of the Sisters with the dust upon their hair?

(Now and not hereafter, while the breath is in our nostrils,
Now and not hereafter, ere the meaner years go by—
Let us now remember many honourable women,
Such as bade us turn again when we were like to die.)

Who recalls the morning and the thunder through the foothills
(Tufts of fleecy shrapnel strung along the empty plains)
And the sun-scarred Red-Cross coaches creeping guarded to the culvert,
And the faces of the Sisters looking gravely from the trains?

(When the days were torment and the nights were clouded terror,
When the Powers of Darkness had dominion on our soul—
When we fled consuming through the Seven Hells of Fever,
These put out their hands to us and healed and made us whole.)

Who recalls the midnight by the bridge's wrecked abutment
(Autumn rain that rattled like a Maxim on the tin)
And the lightning-dazzled levels and the streaming, straining wagons,
And the faces of the Sisters as they bore the wounded in?

(Till the pain was merciful and stunned us into silence—
When each nerve cried out on God that made the misused clay;
When the Body triumphed and the last poor shame departed—
These abode our agonies and wiped the sweat away.)

Who recalls the noontide and the funerals through the market,
(Blanket-hidden bodies, flagless, followed by the flies)
And the footsore firing-party, and the dust and stench and staleness,
And the faces of the Sisters and the glory in their eyes?

(Bold behind the battle, in the open camp all-hallowed,
Patient, wise, and mirthful in the ringed and reeking town,
These endured unresting till they rested from their labours—
Little wasted bodies, ah, so light to lower down !)

Yet their graves are scattered and their names are clean forgotten,
Earth shall not remember, but the Waiting Angel knows
Them that died at Uitvlugt when the plague was on the city—
Her that fell at Simon's Town[1] in service on our foes.

Wherefore we they ransomed, while the breath is in our nostrils,
Now and not hereafter—ere the meaner years go by—
Praise with love and worship many honourable women,
Those that gave their lives for us when we were like to die!

[1] Mary Kingsley.

THE ISLANDERS

1902

No doubt but ye are the People—your throne is above the King's.
Whoso speaks in your presence must say acceptable things:
Bowing the head in worship, bending the knee in fear—
Bringing the word well smoothen—such as a King should hear.

Fenced by your careful fathers, ringed by your leaden seas,
Long did ye wake in quiet and long lie down at ease;
Till ye said of Strife, 'What is it?'; of the Sword, 'It is far from our ken';
Till ye made a sport of your shrunken hosts and a toy of your armèd men.
Ye stopped your ears to the warning—ye would neither look nor heed—
Ye set your leisure before their toil and your lusts above their need.
Because of your witless learning and your beasts of warren and chase,
Ye grudged your sons to their service and your fields for their camping-place.
Ye forced them glean in the highways the straw for the bricks they brought;
Ye forced them follow in byways the craft that ye never taught.

Ye hindered and hampered and crippled; ye thrust out of sight and away
Those that would serve you for honour and those that served you for pay.
Then were the judgments loosened; then was your shame revealed,
At the hands of a little people, few but apt in the field.
Yet ye were saved by a remnant (and your land's long-suffering star),
When your strong men cheered in their millions while your striplings went to the war.
Sons of the sheltered city—unmade, unhandled, unmeet—
Ye pushed them raw to the battle as ye picked them raw from the street.
And what did ye look they should compass? War-craft learned in a breath?
Knowledge unto occasion at the first far view of Death?
So! And ye train your horses and the dogs ye feed and prize?
How are the beasts more worthy than the souls, your sacrifice?
But ye said, 'Their valour shall show them'; but ye said, 'The end is close.'
And ye sent them comfits and pictures to help them harry your foes:
And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and ye flaunted your iron pride,
Ere—ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who could shoot and ride!

Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented
your souls
With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied
oafs at the goals.
Given to strong delusion, wholly believing a lie,
Ye saw that the land lay fenceless, and ye let the months
go by
Waiting some easy wonder, hoping some saving
sign—
Idle—openly idle—in the lee of the forspent Line.
Idle—except for your boasting—and what is your
boasting worth
If ye grudge a year of service to the lordliest life on
earth?
Ancient, effortless, ordered, cycle on cycle set,
Life so long untroubled, that ye who inherit forget
It was not made with the mountains, it is not one with
the deep.
Men, not gods, devised it. Men, not gods, must
keep.
Men, not children, servants, nor kinsfolk called from
afar,
But each man born in the Island broke to the matter
of war.
Soberly and by custom taken and trained for the
same,
Each man born in the Island entered at youth to the
game—
As it were almost cricket, not to be mastered in haste,
But after trial and labour, by temperance, living
chaste.
As it were almost cricket—as it were even your play,

Weighed and pondered and worshipped, and practised day and day.
So ye shall bide sure-guarded when the restless lightnings wake
In the womb of the blotting war-cloud, and the pallid nations quake.
So, at the haggard trumpets, instant your soul shall leap
Forthright, accoutred, accepting—alert from the wells of sleep.
So at the threat ye shall summon—so at the need ye shall send
Men, not children or servants, tempered and taught to the end;
Cleansed of servile panic, slow to dread or despise,
Humble because of knowledge, mighty by sacrifice....
But ye say, 'It will mar our comfort.' Ye say, 'It will minish our trade.'
Do ye wait for the spattered shrapnel ere ye learn how a gun is laid?
For the low, red glare to southward when the raided coast-towns burn?
(Light ye shall have on that lesson, but little time to learn.)
Will ye pitch some white pavilion, and lustily even the odds,
With nets and hoops and mallets, with rackets and bats and rods?
Will the rabbit war with your foemen—the red deer horn them for hire?
Your kept cock-pheasant keep you?—he is master of many a shire.

Arid, aloof, incurious, unthinking, unthanking, gelt,
Will ye loose your schools to flout them till their
brow-beat columns melt?
Will ye pray them, or preach them, or print them, or
ballot them back from your shore?
Will your workmen issue a mandate to bid them
strike no more?
Will ye rise and dethrone your rulers? (Because ye
were idle both?
Pride by Insolence chastened? Indolence purged by
Sloth?)
No doubt but ye are the People; who shall make you
afraid?
Also your gods are many. No doubt but your gods
shall aid.
Idols of greasy altars built for the body's ease;
Proud little brazen Baals and talking fetishes;
Teraphs of sept and party and wise wood-pavement
gods—
These shall come down to the battle and snatch you
from under the rods?
From the gusty, flickering gun-roll with viewless
salvoes rent,
And the pitted hail of the bullets that tell not whence
they were sent?
When ye are ringed as with iron, when ye are scourged
as with whips,
When the meat is yet in your belly, and the boast is
yet on your lips;
When ye go forth at morning and the noon beholds
you broke,
Ere ye lie down at even, your remnant, under the yoke?

No doubt but ye are the People—absolute, strong, and wise;
Whatever your heart has desired ye have not withheld from your eyes.
On your own heads, in your own hands, the sin and the saving lies!

THE PEACE OF DIVES

1903

THE Word came down to Dives in Torment where
he lay:—
'Our World is full of wickedness, My Children maim
and slay,
And the Saint and Seer and Prophet
Can make no better of it
Than to sanctify and prophesy and pray.

Rise up, rise up, thou Dives, and take again thy gold,
And thy women and thy housen as they were to thee
of old.
It may be grace hath found thee
In the furnace where We bound thee,
And that thou shalt bring the peace My Son foretold.'

Then merrily rose Dives and leaped from out his fire,
And walked abroad with diligence to do the Lord's
desire;
And anon the battles ceased,
And the captives were released,
And Earth had rest from Goshen to Gadire.

The Word came down to Satan that raged and roared
alone,
'Mid the shouting of the peoples by the cannon over-
thrown

(But the Prophets, Saints, and Seers
Set each other by the ears,
For each would claim the marvel as his own):—

'Rise up, rise up, thou Satan, upon the Earth to go,
And prove the Peace of Dives if it be good or no:
For all that he hath planned
We deliver to thy hand,
As thy skill shall serve, to break it or bring low.'

Then mightily rose Satan, and about the Earth he hied,
And breathed on Kings in idleness and Princes drunk with pride.
But for all the wrong he breathed
There was never sword unsheathed,
And the fires he lighted flickered out and died.

Then terribly rose Satan and darkened Earth afar,
Till he came on cunning Dives where the money-changers are;
And he saw men pledge their gear
For the gold that buys the spear
And the helmet and the habergeon of war.

Yea, to Dives came the Persian and the Syrian and the Mede—
And their hearts were nothing altered, nor their cunning nor their greed—
And they pledged their flocks and farms
For the King-compelling arms,
And Dives lent according to their need.

Then Satan said to Dives:—'Return again with me,
Who hast broken His Commandment in the day He
set thee free,
Who grindest for thy greed
Man's belly-pinch and need,
And the blood of Man to filthy usury!'

Then softly answered Dives where the money-changers
sit:—
'My Refuge is Our Master, O My Master in the Pit.
But behold all Earth is laid
In the Peace which I have made,
And behold I wait on thee to trouble it!'

Then angrily turned Satan, and about the Seas he fled,
To shake the new-sown peoples with insult, doubt,
and dread;
But, for all the sleight he used,
There was never squadron loosed,
And the brands he flung flew dying and fell dead.

But to Dives came Atlantis and the Captains of the
West—
And their hates were nothing weakened nor their angers
nor unrest—
And they pawned their utmost trade
For the dry, decreeing blade;
And Dives lent and took of them their best.

Then Satan said to Dives:—'Declare thou, by The
Name,
The secret of thy subtlety that turneth mine to shame.

It is known through all the Hells
How many peoples mocked my spells,
And my faithless Kings denied me ere I came.'

Then answered cunning Dives:—'Do not gold and hate abide
At the heart of every Magic, yea, and senseless fear beside?
With gold and fear and hate
I have harnessed state to state,
And with hate and fear and gold their hates are tied.

For hate men seek a weapon, for fear they seek a shield—
Keener blades and broader targes than their frantic neighbours wield—
For gold I arm their hands,
And for gold I buy their lands,
And for gold I sell their enemies the yield.

Their nearest foes may purchase, or their furthest friends may lease,
One by one from Ancient Accad to the Islands of the Seas.
And their covenants they make
For the naked iron's sake,
But I—I trap them armoured into peace.

The flocks that Egypt pledged me to Assyria I drave,
And Pharaoh hath the increase of the herds that Sargon gave.

Not for Ashdod overthrown
Will the Kings destroy their own,
Or their peoples wake the strife they feign to brave.

Is not Carchemish like Calno? For the steeds of their desire
They have sold me seven harvests that I sell to Crowning Tyre;
And the Tyrian sweeps the plains
With a thousand hired wains,
And the Cities keep the peace and—share the hire.

Hast thou seen the pride of Moab? For the swords about his path,
His bond is to Philistia, in half of all he hath.
And he dare not draw the sword
Till Gaza give the word,
And he show release from Askalon and Gath.

Wilt thou call again thy peoples, wilt thou craze anew thy Kings?
Lo! my lightnings pass before thee, and their whistling servant brings,
Ere the drowsy street hath stirred,
Every masked and midnight word,
And the nations break their fast upon these things.

So I make a jest of Wonder, and a mock of Time and Space,
The roofless Seas an hostel, and the Earth a marketplace,

Where the anxious traders know
Each is surety for his foe,
And none may thrive without his fellows' grace.

Now this is all my subtlety and this is all my wit,
God give thee good enlightenment, My Master in the Pit.
But behold, all Earth is laid
In the Peace which I have made,
And behold, I wait on thee to trouble it!'

SOUTH AFRICA

1903

LIVED a woman wonderful,
(May the Lord amend her!)
Neither simple, kind, nor true,
But her Pagan beauty drew
Christian gentlemen a few
Hotly to attend her.

Christian gentlemen a few
From Berwick unto Dover;
For she was South Africa,
And she was South Africa,
She was Our South Africa,
Africa all over!

Half her land was dead with drouth,
Half was red with battle;
She was fenced with fire and sword,
Plague on pestilence outpoured,
Locusts on the greening sward
And murrain on the cattle!

True, ah, true, and overtrue.
That is why we love her!
For she is South Africa,
And she is South Africa,
She is Our South Africa,
Africa all over!

Bitter hard her lovers toiled,
  Scandalous their payment,—
Food forgot on trains derailed;
Cattle-dung where fuel failed;
Water where the mules had staled;
  And sackcloth for their raiment!

So she filled their mouths with dust
  And their bones with fever;
Greeted them with cruel lies;
Treated them despiteful-wise;
Meted them calamities
  Till they vowed to leave her!

They took ship and they took sail,
  Raging, from her borders—
In a little, none the less,
They forgat their sore duresse,
They forgave her frowardness,
  And returned for orders!

They esteemed her favour more
  Than a Throne's foundation,
For the glory of her face
Bade farewell to breed and race—
Yea, and made their burial-place
  Altar of a Nation!

Wherefore, being bought by blood,
  And by blood restorèd
To the arms that nearly lost,
She, because of all she cost,

Stands, a very woman, most
  Perfect and adorèd!

On your feet, and let them know
  This is why we love her!
For she is South Africa,
She is Our South Africa,
Is Our Own South Africa,
  Africa all over!

THE SETTLER

1903

(SOUTH AFRICAN WAR ENDED, MAY 1902)

HERE, where my fresh-turned furrows run,
And the deep soil glistens red,
I will repair the wrong that was done
To the living and the dead.
Here, where the senseless bullet fell,
And the barren shrapnel burst,
I will plant a tree, I will dig a well,
Against the heat and the thirst.

Here, in a large and a sunlit land,
Where no wrong bites to the bone,
I will lay my hand in my neighbour's hand,
And together we will atone
For the set folly and the red breach
And the black waste of it all;
Giving and taking counsel each
Over the cattle-kraal.

Here will we join against our foes—
The hailstroke and the storm,
And the red and rustling cloud that blows
The locust's mile-deep swarm.
Frost and murrain and flood let loose
Shall launch us side by side

In the holy wars that have no truce
'Twixt seed and harvest-tide.

Earth, where we rode to slay or be slain,
Our love shall redeem unto life.
We will gather and lead to her lips again
The waters of ancient strife,
From the far and the fiercely guarded streams
And the pools where we lay in wait,
Till the corn cover our evil dreams
And the young corn our hate.

And when we bring old fights to mind,
We will not remember the sin—
If there be blood on his head of my kind,
Or blood on my head of his kin—
For the ungrazed upland, the untilled lea
Cry, and the fields forlorn:
'The dead must bury their dead, but ye—
Ye serve an host unborn.'

Bless then, Our God, the new-yoked plough
And the good beasts that draw,
And the bread we eat in the sweat of our brow
According to Thy Law.
After us cometh a multitude—
Prosper the work of our hands,
That we may feed with our land's food
The folk of all our lands!

Here, in the waves and the troughs of the plains,
Where the healing stillness lies,

And the vast, benignant sky restrains
  And the long days make wise—
Bless to our use the rain and the sun
  And the blind seed in its bed,
That we may repair the wrong that was done
  To the living and the dead!

SERVICE SONGS

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899–1902

'TOMMY' you was when it began,
But now that it is o'er
You shall be called The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore.

Batt'ry, brigade, flank, centre, van,
Defaulter, Army-corps—
From first to last, The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore.

From 'Alifax to 'Industan,
From York to Singapore—
'Orse, foot, an' guns, The Service Man
'Enceforward, evermore!

CHANT-PAGAN

(ENGLISH IRREGULAR, DISCHARGED)

ME that 'ave been what I've been—
Me that 'ave gone where I've gone—
Me that 'ave seen what I've seen—
'Ow can I ever take on
With awful old England again,
An' 'ouses both sides of the street,
An' 'edges two sides of the lane,
An' the parson an' gentry between,
An' touchin' my 'at when we meet—
Me that 'ave been what I've been?

Me that 'ave watched 'arf a world
'Eave up all shiny with dew,
Kopje on kop to the sun,
An' as soon as the mist let 'em through
Our 'elios winkin' like fun—
Three sides of a ninety-mile square,
Over valleys as big as a shire—
'*Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?*'
An' then the blind drum of our fire . .
An' I'm rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire,
Me!

Me that 'ave rode through the dark
Forty mile, often, on end,
Along the Ma'ollisberg Range,
With only the stars for my mark
An' only the night for my friend,

An' things runnin' off as you pass,
An' things jumpin' up in the grass,
An' the silence, the shine an' the size
Of the 'igh, unexpressible skies—
I am takin' some letters almost
As much as a mile to the post,
An' 'mind you come back with the change!'
Me!

Me that saw Barberton took
When we dropped through the clouds on their 'ead,
An' they 'ove the guns over and fled—
Me that was through Di'mond 'Ill,
An' Pieters an' Springs an' Belfast—
From Dundee to Vereeniging all—
Me that stuck out to the last
(An' five bloomin' bars on my chest)—
I am doin' my Sunday-school best,
By the 'elp of the Squire an' 'is wife
(Not to mention the 'ousemaid an' cook),
To come in an' 'ands up an' be still,
An' honestly work for my bread,
My livin' in that state of life
To which it shall please Gawd to call
Me!

Me that 'ave followed my trade
In the place where the Lightnin's are made;
'Twixt the Rains an' the Sun an' the Moon—
Me that lay down an' got up
Three years with the sky for my roof—
That 'ave ridden my 'unger an' thirst
Six thousand raw mile on the hoof,

With the Vaal an' the Orange for cup,
An' the Brandwater Basin for dish,—
Oh! it's 'ard to be'ave as they wish
(Too 'ard, an' a little too soon),
I'll 'ave to think over it first—

Me!

I will arise an' get 'ence—
I will trek South an' make sure
If it's only my fancy or not
That the sunshine of England is pale,
An' the breezes of England are stale,
An' there's somethin' gone small with the lot.
For *I* know of a sun an' a wind,
An' some plains an' a mountain be'ind,
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence,
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give
Me a job were I ever inclined
To look in an' offsaddle an' live
Where there's neither a road nor a tree—
But only my Maker an' me,
An' I think it will kill me or cure,
So I think I will go there an' see.

Me!

M. I.

(MOUNTED INFANTRY OF THE LINE)

I WISH my mother could see me now, with a fence-
post under my arm,
An' a knife and a spoon in my puttees that I found on
a Boer farm,
Atop of a sore-backed Argentine, with a thirst that
you couldn't buy.
I used to be in the Yorkshires once
(Sussex, Lincolns, and Rifles once),
Hampshires, Glosters, and Scottish once! (*ad lib.*)
But now I am M. I.

That is what we are known as—that is the name you
must call
If you want officers' servants, pickets an' 'orse-guards
an' all—
Details for buryin'-parties, company-cooks or supply—
Turn out the chronic Ikonas! Roll up the ——[1] M. I.!

My 'ands are spotty with veldt-sores, my shirt is a
button an' frill,
An' the things I've used my bay'nit for would make a
tinker ill!
An' I don't know whose dam' column I'm in, nor
where we're trekkin' nor why.
I've trekked from the Vaal to the Orange once—
From the Vaal to the greasy Pongolo once—
(Or else it was called the Zambesi once)—
For now I am M. I.

[1] Number according to taste and service of audience.

That is what we are known as—we are the push you require
For outposts all night under freezin', an' rearguard all day under fire.
Anything 'ot or unwholesome? Anything dusty or dry?
Borrow a bunch of Ikonas! Trot out the —— M. I.!

Our Sergeant-Major's a subaltern, our Captain's a Fusilier—
Our Adjutant's 'late of Somebody's 'Orse,' an' a Melbourne auctioneer;
But you couldn't spot us at 'arf a mile from the crackest caval-ry.
They used to talk about Lancers once,
Hussars, Dragoons, an' Lancers once,
'Elmets, pistols, an' carbines once,
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the orphans they blame
For beggin' the loan of an 'ead-stall an' makin' a mount to the same.
'Cant even look at their 'orselines but some one goes bellerin' 'Hi!
'Ere comes a burglin' Ikona! Footsack, you —— M. I.!'

We're trekkin' our twenty miles a day an' bein' loved by the Dutch,
But we don't hold on by the mane no more, nor lose our stirrups—much;
An' we scout with a senior man in charge where the 'oly white flags fly.

We used to think they were friendly once,
Didn't take any precautions once
(Once, my ducky, an' only once!),
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the beggars that got
Three days 'to learn equitation,' an' six months o' bloomin' well trot!
Cow-guns, an' cattle, an' convoys—an' Mister De Wet on the fly—
We are the rollin' Ikonas! We are the —— M. I.

The new fat regiments come from home, imaginin' vain V.C.'s
(The same as your talky-fighty men which are often Number Threes[1]),
But our words o' command are 'Scatter' an' 'Close' an' 'Let your wounded lie.'
We used to rescue 'em noble once,—
Givin' the range as we raised 'em once—
Gettin' 'em killed as we saved 'em once—
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—we are the lanterns you view
After a fight round the kopjes, lookin' for men that we knew;
Whistlin' an' callin' together, 'altin' to catch the reply:—
"'Elp me! Oh, 'elp me, Ikonas! This way, the —— M. I.!'

[1] Horse-holders when in action, and therefore generally under cover.

I wish my mother could see me now, a-gatherin' news
on my own,
When I ride like a General up to the scrub an' ride
back like Tod Sloan,
Remarkable close to my 'orse's neck to let the shots
go by.
We used to fancy it risky once
(Called it a reconnaissance once),
Under the charge of an orf'cer once,
But now we are M. I.

That is what we are known as—that is the song you
must say
When you want men to be Mausered at one an' a
penny a day;
We are no five-bob Colonials—we are the 'ome-made
supply,
Ask for the London Ikonas! Ring up the —— M. I.!

I wish myself could talk to myself as I left 'im a year ago;
I could tell 'im a lot that would save 'im a lot on the
things that 'e ought to know!
When I think o' that ignorant barrack-bird, it almost
makes me cry.
I used to belong in an Army once
(Gawd! what a rum little Army once),
Red little, dead little Army once!
But now I am M. I.!

That is what we are known as—we are the men that
have been
Over a year at the business, smelt it an' felt it an' seen.

We 'ave got 'old of the needful—*you* will be told by and by;
Wait till you've 'eard the Ikonas, spoke to the old M. I.!

Mount—march, Ikonas! Stand to your 'orses again!
Mop off the frost on the saddles, mop up the miles on the plain.
Out go the stars in the dawnin', up goes our dust to the sky,
Walk—trot, Ikonas! Trek jou,[1] *the old M. I.!*

[1] Get ahead.

COLUMNS

(MOBILE COLUMNS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

OUT o' the wilderness, dusty an' dry
  (*Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!*),
'Oo is it 'eads to the Detail Supply?
  A section, a pompom,[1] *an' six 'undred men.*

'Ere comes the clerk with 'is lantern an' keys
  (*Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!*),
'Surplus of everything—draw what you pleas :
  For the section, the pompom, an' six 'undred m n.'

'What are our orders an' where do we lay?'
  (*Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!*)
'You came after dark—you will leave before day,
  You section, you pompom, you six 'undred men!'

Down the tin street, 'alf awake an' unfed,
'Ark to 'em blessin' the Gen'ral in bed!

Now by the church an' the outspan they wind—
Over the ridge an' it's all lef' be'ind
  For the section, etc.

Soon they will camp as the dawn's growin' grey,
Roll up for coffee an' sleep while they may—
  The section, etc.

[1] One-pounder quick-firing gun.

Read their 'ome letters, their papers an' such,
For they'll move after dark to astonish the Dutch
With a section, etc.

'Untin' for shade as the long hours pass—
Blankets on rifles or burrows in grass,
Lies the section, etc.

Dossin' or beatin' a shirt in the sun,
Watching chameleons or cleanin' a gun,
Waits the section, etc.

With nothin' but stillness as far as you please,
An' the silly mirage stringin' islands an' seas
Round the section, etc.

So they strips off their hide an' they grills in their bones,
Till the shadows crawl out from beneath the pore stones
Towards the section, etc.

An' the Mauser-bird stops an' the jackals begin,
An' the 'orse-guard comes up an' the Gunners 'ook in
As a 'int to the pompom an' six 'undred men. . . .

Off through the dark with the stars to rely on—
(Alpha Centauri an' somethin' Orion)
Moves the section, etc.

Same bloomin' 'ole which the ant-bear 'as broke,
Same bloomin' stumble an' same bloomin' joke
Down the section, etc.

Same 'Which is right?' where the cart-tracks divide,
Same 'Give it up' from the same clever guide
To the section, etc.

Same tumble-down on the same 'idden farm,
Same white-eyed Kaffir 'oo gives the alarm
Of the section, etc.

Same shootin' wild at the end o' the night,
Same flyin'-tackle, an' same messy fight,
By the section, etc.

Same ugly 'iccup an' same 'orrid squeal,
When it's too dark to see an' it's too late to feel
In the section, etc.

(Same batch of prisoners, 'airy an' still,
Watchin' their comrades bolt over the 'ill
From the section, etc.)

Same chilly glare in the eye of the sun
As 'e gets up displeasured to see what was done
By the section, etc.

Same splash o' pink on the stoep or the kraal,
An' the same quiet face which 'as finished with all
In the section, the pompom, an' six 'undred men.

Out o' the wilderness, dusty an' dry
(Time, an' 'igh time to be trekkin' again!),
'Oo is it 'eads to the Detail Supply?
A section, a pompom, an' six 'undred men.

THE PARTING OF THE COLUMNS

'. . . On the —th instant a mixed detachment of Colonials left —— for Cape Town, there to rejoin their respective homeward-bound contingents, after fifteen months' service in the field. They were escorted to the station by the Regular troops in garrison and the bulk of Colonel ——'s column, which has just come in to refit, preparatory to further operations. The leave-taking was of the most cordial character, the men cheering each other continuously.'
—*Any Newspaper, during the South African War.*

WE'VE rode an' fought an' ate an' drunk as rations come to hand,[1]
Together for a year an' more around this stinkin' land:
Now you are goin' home again, but we must see it through.
We needn't tell we liked you well. Good-bye—good luck to you!

You 'ad no special call to come, and so you doubled out,
An' learned us how to camp an' cook an' steal a horse an' scout.
Whatever game we fancied most, you joyful played it too,
An' rather better on the whole. Good-bye—good luck to you!

[1] Convoys were not seldom captured by the Boers.

There isn't much we 'aven't shared, since Kruger cut an' run,
The same old work, the same old skoff,[1] the same old dust an' sun;
The same old chance that laid us out, or winked an' let us through;
The same old Life, the same old Death. Good-bye--good luck to you!

Our blood 'as truly mixed with yours—all down the Red-Cross train,
We've bit the same thermometer in Bloemin'-typhoidtein.[2]
We've 'ad the same old temp'rature—the same relaps's too,
The same old saw-backed fever-chart. Good-bye--good luck to you!

But 'twasn't merely this an' that (which all the world may know),
'Twas how you talked an' looked at things which made us like you so.
All independent, queer an' odd, but most amazin' new.
My word! you shook us up to rights. Good-bye—good luck to you!

Think o' the stories round the fire, the tales along the trek—
O' Calgary, an' Wellin'ton, an' Sydney an' Quebec;

[1] Food.

[2] There were several thousands of typhoid cases in Bloemfontein. Hence its name among the troops.

Of mine an' farm, an' ranch an' run, an' moose an' caribou,
An' parrots peckin' lambs to death! Good-bye—good luck to you!

We've seen your 'ome by word o' mouth, we've watched your rivers shine,
We've 'eard your bloomin' forests blow of eucalyp' and pine;
Your young, gay countries north an' south, we feel we own 'em too,
For they was made by rank an' file. Good-bye—good luck to you!

We'll never read the papers now without inquirin' first
For word from all those friendly dorps where you was born an' nursed.
Why, Dawson, Galle, an' Montreal—Port Darwin—Timaru,
They're only just across the road! Good-bye—good luck to you!

Good-bye!—So-long! Don't lose yourselves—nor us, nor all kind friends,
But tell the girls your side the drift we're comin'—when it ends!
Good-bye, you bloomin' Atlasses! You've taught us somethin' new:
The world's no bigger than a kraal. Good-bye—good luck to you!

TWO KOPJES

(MADE YEOMANRY TOWARDS THE END OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

ONLY two African kopjes,
  Only the cart-tracks that wind
Empty and open between 'em,
  Only the Transvaal behind;
Only an Aldershot column
  Marching to conquer the land . . .
Only a sudden and solemn
  Visit, unarmed, to the Rand.

Then scorn not the African kopje,
  The kopje that smiles in the heat,
The wholly unoccupied kopje,
  The home of Cornelius and Piet.
You can never be sure of your kopje,
  But of this be you blooming well sure,
A kopje is always a kopje,
  And a Boojer is always a Boer!

Only two African kopjes,
  Only the vultures above,
Only baboons—at the bottom,[1]
  Only some buck on the move;
Only a Kensington draper
  Only pretending to scout . . .
Only bad news for the paper,
  Only another knock-out.

[1] Showing that men are at the top.

Then mock not the African kopje,
And rub not your flank on its side,
The silent and simmering kopje,
The kopje beloved by the guide.
You can never be, etc.

Only two African kopjes,
Only the dust of their wheels,
Only a bolted commando,
Only our guns at their heels . . .
Only a little barb-wire,
Only a natural fort,
Only 'by sections retire,'
Only 'regret to report'!

Then mock not the African kopje,
Especially when it is twins,
One sharp and one table-topped kopje
For that's where the trouble begins.
You can never be, etc.

Only two African kopjes
Baited the same as before—
Only we've had it so often,
Only we're taking no more . . .
Only a wave to our troopers,
Only our flanks swinging past,
Only a dozen voorloopers,[1]
Only *we*'ve learned it at last!

Then mock not the African kopje,
But take off your hat to the same,

[1] Leading horsemen of the Boers.

The patient, impartial old kopje,
  The kopje that taught us the game!
For all that we knew in the Columns,
  And all they've forgot on the Staff,
We learned at the Fight o' Two Kopjes,
  Which lasted two years an' a half.

Oh, mock not the African kopje,
  Not even when peace has been signed—
The kopje that isn't a kopje—
  The kopje that copies its kind.
You can never be sure of your kopje,
  But of this be you blooming well sure,
That a kopje is always a kopje,
  And a Boojer is always a Boer!

THE INSTRUCTOR

(NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS OF THE LINE)

AT times when under cover I 'ave said,
To keep my spirits up an' raise a laugh,
'Earin' 'im pass so busy over-'ead—
Old Nickel-Neck, 'oo isn't on the Staff—
'*There's one above is greater than us all.*'

Before 'im I 'ave seen my Colonel fall,
An' watched 'im write my Captain's epitaph
So that a long way off it could be read—
He '*as* the knack o' makin' men feel small—
Old Whistle-Tip, 'oo isn't on the Staff.

There is no sense in fleein' (I 'ave fled),
Better go on an' do the belly-crawl,
An' 'ope 'e'll 'it some other man instead
Of you 'e seems to 'unt so speshual—
Fitzy van Spitz, 'oo isn't on the Staff.

An' thus in mem'ry's cinematograph,
Now that the show is over, I recall
The peevish voice an' 'oary mushroom 'ead
Of 'im we owned was greater than us all,
'Oo give instruction to the quick an' the dead—
The Shudderin' Beggar—not upon the Staff!

BOOTS

(INFANTRY COLUMNS)

WE'RE foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa—
Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Seven—six—eleven—five—nine-an'-twenty mile to-day—
Four—eleven—seventeen—thirty-two the day before—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at what's in front of you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again);
Men—men—men—men—men go mad with watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war.

Try—try—try—try—to think o' something different—
Oh—my—God—keep—me from goin' lunatic!
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war.

Count—count—count—count—the bullets in the bandoliers.
If—your—eyes—drop—they will get atop o' you!
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again)—
There's no discharge in the war!

We—can—stick—out—'unger, thirst, an' weariness,
But—not—not—not—not the chronic sight of 'em—
Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

'Tain't—so—bad—by—day because o' company,
But night—brings—long—strings—o' forty thousand million
Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again.
There's no discharge in the war!

I—'ave—marched—six—weeks in 'Ell an' certify
It—is—not—fire—devils, dark, or anything,
But boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

THE MARRIED MAN

(RESERVIST OF THE LINE)

THE bachelor 'e fights for one
  As joyful as can be;
But the married man don't call it fun,
  Because 'e fights for three—
For 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (An' Two an' One make Three)
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
  An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea!

The bachelor pokes up 'is 'ead
  To see if you are gone;
But the married man lies down instead,
  An' waits till the sights come on.
For 'Im an' 'Er an' a hit
  (Direct or ricochee)
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
  An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea!

The bachelor will miss you clear
  To fight another day;
But the married man, 'e says 'No fear!'
  'E wants you out of the way
Of 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (An' 'is road to 'is farm or the sea),
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,
  An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea!

The bachelor 'e fights 'is fight
  An' stretches out an' snores;
But the married man sits up all night—
  For 'e don't like out o' doors.
'E'll strain an' listen an' peer
  An' give the first alarm—
For the sake o' the breathin' 'e's used to 'ear
  An' the 'ead on the thick of 'is arm.

The bachelor may risk 'is 'ide
  To 'elp you when you're downed;
But the married man will wait beside
  Till the ambulance comes round.
'E'll take your 'ome address
  An' all you've time to say,
Or if 'e sees there's 'ope, 'e'll press
  Your art'ry 'alf the day—

For 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (An' One from Three leaves Two),
For 'e knows you wanted to finish your bit,
  An' 'e knows 'oo's wantin' you.
Yes, 'Im an' 'Er an' It
  (Our 'oly One in Three),
We're all of us anxious to finish our bit,
  An' we want to get 'ome to our tea!

Yes, It an' 'Er an' 'Im,
  Which often makes me think
The married man must sink or swim
  An'—'e can't afford to sink!

Oh, 'Im an' It an' 'Er
  Since Adam an' Eve began!
So I'd rather fight with the bache*ler*
  An' be nursed by the married man!

LICHTENBERG

(NEW SOUTH WALES CONTINGENT)

SMELLS are surer than sounds or sights
To make your heart-strings crack—
They start those awful voices o' nights
That whisper, 'Old man, come back!'
That must be why the big things pass
And the little things remain,
Like the smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain.

There was some silly fire on the flank
And the small wet drizzling down—
There were the sold-out shops and the bank
And the wet, wide-open town;
And we were doing escort-duty
To somebody's baggage-train,
And I smelt wattle by Lichtenberg—
Riding in, in the rain.

It was all Australia to me—
All I had found or missed:
Every face I was crazy to see,
And every woman I'd kissed;
All that I shouldn't ha' done, God knows!
(As He knows I'll do it again),
That smell of the wattle round Lichtenberg,
Riding in, in the rain!

And I saw Sydney the same as ever,
  The picnics and brass bands;
And my little homestead on Hunter River
  And my new vines joining hands.
It all came over me in one act
  Quick as a shot through the brain—
With the smell of the wattle round Lichtenberg,
  Riding in, in the rain.

I have forgotten a hundred fights,
  But one I shall not forget—
With the raindrops bunging up my sights
  And my eyes bunged up with wet;
And through the crack and the stink of the cordite
  (Ah, Christ! My country again!)
The smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg,
  Riding in, in the rain!

STELLENBOSCH

(COMPOSITE COLUMNS)

THE General 'eard the firin' on the flank,
An' 'e sent a mounted man to bring 'im back
The silly, pushin' person's name an' rank
'Oo'd dared to answer Brother Boer's attack:
For there might 'ave been a serious engagement,
An' 'e might 'ave wasted 'alf-a-dozen men;
So 'e ordered 'im to stop 'is operations round the kopjes,
An' 'e told 'im off before the Staff at ten!

An' it all goes into the laundry,
But it never comes out in the wash,
'Ow we're sugared about by the old men
('Eavy-sterned, amateur old men!)
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men
For fear o' Stellenbosch![1]

The General 'ad 'produced a great effect,'
The General 'ad the country cleared—almost;
The General "'ad no reason to expect,'
An' the Boers 'ad us bloomin' well on toast!
For we might 'ave crossed the drift before the twilight,
Instead o' sittin' down an' takin' root;

[1] The more notoriously incompetent commanders used to be sent to the town of Stellenbosch, which name presently became a verb.

But we was not allowed, so the Boojers scooped the crowd,
To the last survivin' bandolier an' boot.

The General saw the farm'ouse in 'is rear,
With its stoep so nicely shaded from the sun;
Sez 'e, 'I'll pitch my tabernacle 'ere,'
An' 'e kept us muckin' round till 'e 'ad done.
For 'e might have caught the confluent pneumonia
From sleepin' in his gaiters in the dew;
So 'e took a book an' dozed while the other columns closed,
An' De Wet's commando out an' trickled through!

The General saw the mountain-range ahead,
With their 'elios showin' saucy on the 'eight,
So 'e 'eld us to the level ground instead,
An' telegraphed the Boojers wouldn't fight.
For 'e might 'ave gone an' sprayed 'em with a pom-pom,
Or 'e might 'ave slung a squadron out to see—
But 'e wasn't takin' chances in them 'igh an' 'ostile kranzes—
He was markin' time to earn a K.C.B.

The General got 'is decorations thick
(The men that backed 'is lies could not complain),
The Staff 'ad D.S.O.'s till we was sick,
An' the soldier—'ad the work to do again!
For 'e might 'ave known the District was an 'otbed,
Instead of 'andin' over, upside-down,

To a man 'oo 'ad to fight 'alf a year to put it right,
While the General sat an' slandered 'im in town!

An' it all went into the laundry,
But it never came out in the wash.
We were sugared about by the old men
(Panicky, perishin' old men)
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men
For fear o' Stellenbosch!

HALF-BALLADE OF WATERVAL

(NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF PRISONERS)

WHEN by the labour of my 'ands
I've 'elped to pack a transport tight
With prisoners for foreign lands,
I ain't transported with delight.
I know it's only just an' right,
But yet it somehow sickens me,
For I 'ave learned at Waterval[1]
The meanin' of captivity.

Be'ind the pegged barb-wire strands,
Beneath the tall electric light,
We used to walk in bare-'ead bands,
Explainin' 'ow we lost our fight;
An' that is what they'll do to-night
Upon the steamer out at sea,
If I 'ave learned at Waterval
The meanin' of captivity.

They'll never know the shame that brands—
Black shame no livin' down makes white—
The mockin' from the sentry-stands,
The women's laugh, the gaoler's spite.
We are too bloomin'-much polite,
But that is 'ow I'd 'ave us be
Since I 'ave learned at Waterval
The meanin' of captivity.

[1] Where the majority of English prisoners were kept by the Boers.

They'll get those draggin' days all right,
  Spent as a foreigner commands,
An' 'orrors of the locked-up night,
  With 'Ell's own thinkin' on their 'ands.
  I'd give the gold o' twenty Rands
    (If it was mine) to set 'em free
For I 'ave learned at Waterval
    The meanin' of captivity!

PIET

(REGULAR OF THE LINE)

I DO not love my Empire's foes,
  Nor call 'em angels; still,
What *is* the sense of 'atin' those
  'Oom you are paid to kill?
So, barrin' all that foreign lot
  Which only joined for spite,
Myself, I'd just as soon as not
  Respect the man I fight.
    Ah, there, Piet!—'is trousies to 'is knees,
    'Is coat-tails lyin' level in the bullet-sprinkled
      breeze;
    'E does not lose 'is rifle an' 'e does not lose 'is
      seat.
    I've known a lot o' people ride a dam' sight
      worse than Piet!

I've 'eard 'im cryin' from the ground
  Like Abel's blood of old,
An' skirmished out to look, an' found
  The beggar nearly cold.
I've waited on till 'e was dead
  (Which couldn't 'elp 'im much),
But many grateful things 'e's said
  To me for doin' such.
    Ah, there, Piet! whose time 'as come to die,
    'Is carcass past rebellion, but 'is eyes inquirin'
      why.

Though dressed in stolen uniform with badge o' rank complete,
I've known a lot o' fellers go a dam' sight worse than Piet.

An' when there wasn't aught to do
But camp an' cattle-guards,
I've fought with 'im the 'ole day through
At fifteen 'undred yards;
Long afternoons o' lyin' still,
An' 'earin' as you lay
The bullets swish from 'ill to 'ill
Like scythes among the 'ay.
Ah, there, Piet!—be'ind 'is stony kop—
With 'is Boer bread an' biltong,[1] an' 'is flask of awful Dop;[2]
'Is Mauser for amusement an' 'is pony for retreat,
I've known a lot o' fellers shoot a dam' sight worse than Piet.

He's shoved 'is rifle 'neath my nose
Before I'd time to think,
An' borrowed all my Sunday clo'es
An' sent me 'ome in pink;
An' I 'ave crept (Lord, 'ow I've crept!)
On 'ands an' knees I've gone,
An' spoored an' floored an' caught an' kept
An' sent him to Ceylon![3]
Ah, there, Piet!—you've sold me many a pup,
When week on week alternate it was you an' me "'ands up!'

[1] Dried meat. [2] Cape brandy.
[3] One of the camps for prisoners of this war was in Ceylon.

But though I never made *you* walk man-naked in
the 'eat,
I've known a lot o' fellers stalk a dam' sight worse
than Piet.

From Plewman's to Marabastad,
From Ookiep to De Aar,
Me an' my trusty friend 'ave 'ad,
As you might say, a war;
But seein' what both parties done
Before 'e owned defeat,
I ain't more proud of 'avin' won
Than I am pleased with Piet.
Ah, there, Piet!—picked up be'ind the drive!
The wonder wasn't 'ow 'e fought, but 'ow 'e kep'
alive,
With nothin' in 'is belly, on 'is back, or to 'is feet—
I've known a lot o' men behave a dam' sight worse
than Piet.

No more I'll 'ear 'is rifle crack
Along the block'ouse fence—
The beggar's on the peaceful tack,
Regardless of expense;
For countin' what 'e eats an' draws,
An' gifts an' loans as well,
'E's gettin' 'alf the Earth, because
'E didn't give us 'Ell!
Ah, there, Piet! with your brand-new English
plough,
Your gratis tents an' cattle, an' your most un-
grateful frow,

You've made the British taxpayer rebuild your
country-seat—
I've known some pet battalions charge a dam'
sight less than Piet.

'WILFUL-MISSING'

(DESERTERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR)

THERE is a world outside the one you know,
To which for curiousness 'Ell can't compare—
It is the place where 'wilful-missings' go,
As we can testify, for we are there.

You may 'ave read a bullet laid us low,
That we was gathered in 'with reverent care'
An' buried proper. But it was not so,
As we can testify,—for we are there.

They can't be certain—faces alter so
After the old *aas-vogel's*[1] 'ad 'is share;
The uniform's the mark by which they go—
An'—ain't it odd?—the one we best can spare.

We might 'ave seen our chance to cut the show-
Name, number, record, an' begin elsewhere—
Leavin' some not too late-lamented foe
One funeral—private—British—for 'is share.

We may 'ave took it yonder in the low
Bush-veldt that sends men stragglin' unaware
Among the Kaffirs, till their columns go,
An' they are left past call or count or care.

[1] Vulture.

We might 'ave been your lovers long ago,
'Usbands or children—comfort or despair.
Our death (*an'* burial) settles all we owe,
An' why we done it is our own affair.

Marry again, an' we will not say no,
Nor come to barstardise the kids you bear.
Wait on in 'ope—you've all your life below
Before you'll ever 'ear us on the stair.

There is no need to give our reasons, though
Gawd knows we all 'ad reasons which were fair;
But other people might not judge 'em so—
An' now it doesn't matter what they were.

What man can weigh or size another's woe?
There are some things too bitter 'ard to bear.
Suffice it we 'ave finished—Domino!
As we can testify, for we are there,
In the side-world where 'wilful-missings' go.

'UBIQUE'

(ROYAL ARTILLERY)

THERE is a word you often see, pronounce it as you may—
'You bike,' 'you bykwe,' 'ubbikwe'—alludin' to R.A.
It serves 'Orse, Field, an' Garrison as motto for a crest;
An' when you've found out all it means I'll tell you 'alf the rest.

Ubique means the long-range Krupp be'ind the low-range 'ill—
Ubique means you'll pick it up an', while you do, stand still.
Ubique means you've caught the flash an' timed it by the sound.
Ubique means five gunners' 'ash before you've loosed a round.

Ubique means Blue Fuse,[1] an' make the 'ole to sink the trail.
Ubique means stand up an' take the Mauser's 'alf-mile 'ail.
Ubique means the crazy team not God nor man can 'old.
Ubique means that 'orse's scream which turns your innards cold!

[1] Extreme range.

Ubique means 'Bank, 'Olborn, Bank—a penny all the way'—
The soothin', jingle-bump-an'-clank from day to peaceful day.
Ubique means 'They've caught De Wet, an' now we shan't be long.'
Ubique means 'I much regret, the beggar's goin' strong!'

Ubique means the tearin' drift where, breech-blocks jammed with mud,
The khaki muzzles duck an' lift across the khaki flood.
Ubique means the dancing plain that changes rocks to Boers.
Ubique means mirage again an' shellin' all outdoors.

Ubique means 'Entrain at once for Grootdefeatfontein.'
Ubique means 'Off-load your guns'—at midnight in the rain!
Ubique means 'More mounted men. Return all guns to store.'
Ubique means the R.A.M.R. Infantillery Corps![1]

Ubique means that warnin' grunt the perished linesman knows,
When o'er 'is strung an' sufferin' front the shrapnel sprays 'is foes;
An' as their firin' dies away the 'usky whisper runs
From lips that 'aven't drunk all day: 'The Guns! Thank Gawd, the Guns!'

[1] The Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles—when mounted infantry were badly needed.

Extreme, depressed, point-blank or short, end-first or
any'ow,
From Colesberg Kop to Quagga's Poort—from
'Ninety-Nine till now—
By what I've 'eard the others tell an' I in spots 'ave
seen,
There's nothin' this side 'Eaven or 'Ell Ubique doe in't
mean!

THE RETURN

(ALL ARMS)

PEACE is declared, an' I return
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
The size an' meanin' of the game.
I did no more than others did,
I don't know where the change began.
I started as a average kid,
I finished as a thinkin' man.

If England was what England seems,
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
I 'eard it in my comrade's tone.
I saw it on my neighbour's cheek
Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me—not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains which never let you near,
An' stars to all eternity;

An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
  The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills—
  These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
  An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
  For owners when a column passed;
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
  Men, met by night, you never knew
Until—'is face—by shellfire seen—
  Once—an' struck off. *They* taught me too.

The day's lay-out—the mornin' sun
  Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
  An' the full roar that lasts till night;
An' the pore dead that look so old
  An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold—
  These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years—
  A thousand Places left be'ind—
An' Men from both two 'emispheres
  Discussin' things of every kind;
So much more near than I 'ad known,
  So much more great than I 'ad guessed—
An' me, like all the rest, alone—
  But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me—not pride,
  Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
  The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
  To do with little things again. . . .
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
  Look after me in Thamesfontein![1]

If England was what England seems,
  An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
  'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!

[1] London.

RECESSIONAL

1897

(AFTER QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE)

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line.
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
  The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
  On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law—

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

THE END

THE YEARS BETWEEN

DEDICATION

To the Seven Watchmen

1918

SEVEN Watchmen sitting in a tower,
Watching what had come upon mankind,
Showed the Man the Glory and the Power,
And bade him shape the Kingdom to his mind.
'All things on Earth your will shall win you'
('Twas so their counsel ran).
'But the Kingdom—the Kingdom is within you,'
Said the Man's own mind to the Man.
For time—and some time—
As it was in the bitter years before
So it shall be in the over-sweetened hour—
That a man's mind is wont to tell him more
Than Seven Watchmen sitting in a tower.

THE ROWERS

1902

(*When Germany proposed that England should help her in a Naval Demonstration to collect debts from Venezuela.*)

THE banked oars fell an hundred strong,
  And backed and threshed and ground,
But bitter was the rowers' song
  As they brought the war-boat round.

They had no heart for the rally and roar
  That makes the whale-bath smoke—
When the great blades cleave and hold and leave
  As one on the racing stroke.

They sang:—'What reckoning do you keep,
  And steer her by what star,
If we come unscathed from the Southern deep
  To be wrecked on a Baltic bar?

Last night you swore our voyage was done,
  But seaward still we go,
And you tell us now of a secret vow
  You have made with an open foe!

That we must lie off a lightless coast
  And haul and back and veer,
At the will of the breed that have wronged us most
  For a year and a year and a year!

There was never a shame in Christendie
  They laid not to our door—
And you say we must take the winter sea
  And sail with them once more?

Look South! The gale is scarce o'erpast
  That stripped and laid us down,
When we stood forth but they stood fast
  And prayed to see us drown.

Our dead they mocked are scarcely cold,
  Our wounds are bleeding yet—
And you tell us now that our strength is sold
  To help them press for a debt!

'Neath all the flags of all mankind
  That use upon the seas,
Was there no other fleet to find
  That you strike hands with these?

Of evil times that men can choose
  On evil fate to fall,
What brooding Judgment let you loose
  To pick the worst of all?

In sight of peace—from the Narrow Seas
  O'er half the world to run—
With a cheated crew, to league anew
  With the Goth and the shameless Hun!'

THE VETERANS

(WRITTEN FOR THE GATHERING OF SURVIVORS OF THE INDIAN MUTINY, ALBERT HALL, 1907)

To-day, across our fathers' graves,
The astonished years reveal
The remnant of that desperate host
Which cleansed our East with steel.

Hail and farewell! We greet you here,
With tears that none will scorn—
O Keepers of the House of old,
Or ever we were born!

One service more we dare to ask—
Pray for us, heroes, pray,
That when Fate lays on us our task
We do not shame the Day!

THE DECLARATION OF LONDON

29TH JUNE, 1911

'On the reassembling of Parliament after the Coronation, the Government have no intention of allowing their followers to vote according to their convictions on the Declaration of London, but insist on a strictly party vote.'—*Daily Papers.*

We were all one heart and one race
When the Abbey trumpets blew.
For a moment's breathing-space
We had forgotten you.
Now you return to your honoured place
Panting to shame us anew.

We have walked with the Ages dead—
With our Past alive and ablaze:
And you bid us pawn our honour for bread,
This day of all the days!
And you cannot wait till our guests are sped,
Or last week's wreath decays?

The light is still in our eyes
Of Faith and Gentlehood,
Of Service and Sacrifice;
And it does not match our mood,
To turn so soon to your treacheries
That starve our land of her food.

Our ears still carry the sound
  Of our once-Imperial seas,
Exultant after our King was crowned,
  Beneath the sun and the breeze.
It is too early to have them bound
  Or sold at your decrees.

Wait till the memory goes,
  Wait till the visions fade.
We may betray in time, God knows,
  But we would not have it said,
When you make report to our scornful foes,
  That we kissed as we betrayed!

ULSTER

1912

Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.—*Isaiah* lix. 6.

THE dark eleventh hour
Draws on and sees us sold
To every evil power
We fought against of old.
Rebellion, rapine, hate,
Oppression, wrong, and greed
Are loosed to rule our fate,
By England's act and deed.

The Faith in which we stand,
The laws we made and guard—
Our honour, lives, and land—
Are given for reward
To Murder done by night,
To Treason taught by day,
To folly, sloth, and spite,
And we are thrust away.

The blood our fathers spilt,
Our love, our toils, our pains,
Are counted us for guilt,
And only bind our chains.

Before an Empire's eyes
The traitor claims his price.
What need of further lies?
We are the sacrifice.

We asked no more than leave
To reap where we had sown,
Through good and ill to cleave
To our own Flag and Throne.
Now England's shot and steel
Beneath that Flag must show
How loyal hearts should kneel
To England's oldest foe.

We know the wars prepared
On every peaceful home,
We know the hells declared
For such as serve not Rome—
The terror, threats, and dread
In market, hearth, and field—
We know, when all is said,
We perish if we yield.

Believe, we dare not boast,
Believe, we do not fear—
We stand to pay the cost
In all that men hold dear.
What answer from the North?
One Law, one Land, one Throne.
If England drive us forth
We shall not fall alone!

THE COVENANT

ULSTER, 1914

We thought we ranked above the chance of ill.
  Others might fall, not we, for we were wise—
Merchants in freedom. So, of our free-will,
  We let our servants drug our strength with lies.
The pleasure and the poison had its way
  On us as on the meanest, till we learned
That he who lies will steal, who steals will slay.
  Neither God's judgment nor man's heart was
    turned.

Yet there remains His Mercy—to be sought
Through wrath and peril till we cleanse the wrong
By that last right which our forefathers claimed
When their Law failed them and its stewards were
    bought.
This is our cause. God help us, and make strong
Our wills to meet Him later, unashamed!

FRANCE

1913

BROKE to every known mischance, lifted over all
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soul;
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,
First to follow Truth and last to leave old Truths behind—
France, beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind!

Ere our birth (rememberest thou?) side by side we lay
Fretting in the womb of Rome to begin our fray.
Ere men knew our tongues apart, our one task was known—
Each to mould the other's fate as he wrought his own.
To this end we stirred mankind till all Earth was ours,
Till our world-end strifes begat wayside Thrones and Powers—
Puppets that we made or broke to bar the other's path—
Necessary outpost-folk, hirelings of our wrath.
To this end we stormed the seas, tack for tack, and burst
Through the doorways of new worlds, doubtful which was first,
Hand on hilt (rememberest thou?) ready for the blow—
Sure, whatever else we met, we should meet our foe.

Spurred or baulked at every stride by the other's strength,
So we rode the ages down and every ocean's length!

Where did you refrain from us or we refrain from you?
Ask the wave that has not watched war between us two!
Others held us for a while, but with weaker charms,
These we quitted at the call for each other's arms.
Eager toward the known delight, equally we strove—
Each the other's mystery, terror, need, and love.
To each other's open court with our proofs we came.
Where could we find honour else, or men to test our claim?
From each other's throat we wrenched—valour's last reward—
That extorted word of praise gasped 'twixt lunge and guard.
In each other's cup we poured mingled blood and tears,
Brutal joys, unmeasured hopes, intolerable fears—
All that soiled or salted life for a thousand years.
Proved beyond the need of proof, matched in every clime,
O Companion, we have lived greatly through all time!

Yoked in knowledge and remorse, now we come to rest,
Laughing at old villainies that Time has turned to jest;

Pardoning old necessities no pardon can efface—
That undying Sin we shared in Rouen market-place!

Now we watch the new years shape, wondering if they hold
Fiercer lightnings in their heart than we launched of old.
Now we hear new voices rise, question, boast or gird,
As we raged (rememberest thou?) when our crowds were stirred.
Now we count new keels afloat, and new hosts on land,
Massed like ours (rememberest thou?) when our strokes were planned.
We were schooled for dear life's sake, to know each other's blade.
What can Blood and Iron make more than we have made?
We have learned by keenest use to know each other's mind.
What shall Blood and Iron loose that we cannot bind?
We who swept each other's coast, sacked each other's home,
Since the sword of Brennus clashed on the scales at Rome,
Listen, count and close again, wheeling girth to girth,
In the linked and steadfast guard set for peace on Earth!

Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,
Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil;

Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's
mind,
First to face the Truth and last to leave old Truths
behind—
France, beloved of every soul that loves or serves its
kind!

'FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE'

1914

For all we have and are,
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and take the war.
The Hun is at the gate!
Our world has passed away,
In wantonness o'erthrown.
There is nothing left to-day
But steel and fire and stone!
Though all we knew depart,
The old Commandments stand:—
'In courage keep your heart,
In strength lift up your hand.

Once more we hear the word
That sickened Earth of old:—
'No Law except the Sword
Unsheathed and uncontrolled.
Once more it knits mankind,
Once more the nations go
To meet and break and bind
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight,
The Ages' slow-bought gain,
They shrivelled in a night.
Only ourselves remain

To face the naked days
In silent fortitude,
Through perils and dismays
Renewed and re-renewed.
    Though all we made depart,
    The old Commandments stand:—
    'In patience keep your heart,
    In strength lift up your hand.'

No easy hope or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will, and soul.
There is but one task for all—
One life for each to give.
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

A SONG IN STORM

(1914–18)

BE well assured that on our side
  The abiding oceans fight,
Though headlong wind and heaping tide
  Make us their sport to-night.
By force of weather, not of war,
  In jeopardy we steer:
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy
  Whereby it shall appear
    How in all time of our distress,
    And our deliverance too,
    The game is more than the player of the game,
    And the ship is more than the crew!

Out of the mist into the mirk
  The glimmering combers roll.
Almost these mindless waters work
  As though they had a soul—
Almost as though they leagued to whelm
  Our flag beneath their green:
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy
  Whereby it shall be seen, etc.

Be well assured, though wave and wind
  Have mightier blows in store,
That we who keep the watch assigned
  Must stand to it the more;

And as our streaming bows rebuke
  Each billow's baulked career,
Sing, welcome Fate's discourtesy
  Whereby it is made clear, etc.

No matter though our decks be swept
  And mast and timber crack—
We can make good all loss except
  The loss of turning back.
So, 'twixt these Devils and our deep
  Bid courteous trumpets sound,
To welcome Fate's discourtesy
  Whereby it will be found, etc.

Be well assured, though in our power
  Is nothing left to give
But chance and place to meet the hour,
  And leave to strive to live,
Till these dissolve our Order holds,
  Our Service binds us here.
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy
  Whereby it is made clear
    How in all time of our distress,
    As in our triumph too,
    The game is more than the player of the game,
    And the ship is more than the crew!

THE OUTLAWS

1914

THROUGH learned and laborious years
They set themselves to find
Fresh terrors and undreamed-of fears
To heap upon mankind.

All that they drew from Heaven above
Or digged from earth beneath,
They laid into their treasure-trove
And arsenals of death:

While, for well-weighed advantage' sake,
Ruler and ruled alike
Built up the faith they meant to break
When the fit hour should strike.

They traded with the careless earth,
And good return it gave;
They plotted by their neighbour's hearth
The means to make him slave.

When all was ready to their hand
They loosed their hidden sword,
And utterly laid waste a land
Their oath was pledged to guard.

Coldly they went about to raise
To life and make more dread

Abominations of old days,
  That men believed were dead.

They paid the price to reach their goal
  Across a world in flame;
But their own hate slew their own soul
  Before that victory came.

ZION

(1914–18)

THE Doorkeepers of Zion,
  They do not always stand
In helmet and whole armour,
  With halberds in their hand;
But, being sure of Zion
  And all her mysteries,
They rest awhile in Zion,
Sit down and smile in Zion;
Ay, even jest in Zion;
  In Zion, at their ease.

The Gatekeepers of Baal,
  They dare not sit or lean,
But fume and fret and posture
  And foam and curse between;
For, being bound to Baal,
  Whose sacrifice is vain,
Their rest is scant with Baal,
They glare and pant for Baal,
They mouth and rant for Baal;
  For Baal in their pain!

But we will go to Zion,
  By choice and not through dread,
With these our present comrades
  And those our present dead;

And, being free of Zion
  In both her fellowships,
Sit down and sup in Zion—
Stand up and drink in Zion
Whatever cup in Zion
  Is offered to our lips!

LORD ROBERTS

(DIED AT ST. OMER, NOVEMBER 14, 1914)

He passed in the very battle-smoke
  Of the war that he had descried.
Three hundred mile of cannon spoke
  When the Master-Gunner died.

He passed to the very sound of the guns;
  But, before his eye grew dim,
He had seen the faces of the sons
  Whose sires had served with him.

He had touched their sword-hilts and greeted
    each
  With the old sure word of praise;
And there was virtue in touch and speech
  As it had been in old days.

So he dismissed them and took his rest,
  And the steadfast spirit went forth
Between the adoring East and West
  And the tireless guns of the North.

Clean, simple, valiant, well-beloved,
  Flawless in faith and fame,
Whom neither ease nor honours moved
  An hair's-breadth from his aim.

Never again the war-wise face,
  The weighed and urgent word
That pleaded in the market-place—
  Pleaded and was not heard!

Yet from his life a new life springs
  Through all the hosts to come,
And Glory is the least of things
  That follow this man home.

THE QUESTION

1916[1]

BRETHREN, how shall it fare with me
When the war is laid aside,
If it be proven that I am he
For whom a world has died?

If it be proven that all my good
And the greater good I will make,
Were purchased me by a multitude
Who suffered for my sake?

That I was delivered by mere mankind
Vowed to one sacrifice,
And not, as I hold them, battle-blind,
But dying with open eyes?

That they did not ask me to draw the sword
When they stood to endure their lot—
That they only looked to me for a word,
And I answered I knew them not?

If it be found, when the battle clears,
Their death has set me free,
Then how shall I live with myself through the years
Which they have bought for me?

[1] Attitude of the United States of America during the first two years, seven months and four days of the Great War.

Brethren, how must it fare with me,
  Or how am I justified,
If it be proven that I am he
  For whom mankind has died—
If it be proven that I am he
  Who, being questioned, denied?

THE CHOICE

(6TH APRIL, 1917)

The American Spirit speaks:—

To the Judge of Right and Wrong
With Whom fulfilment lies
Our purpose and our power belong,
Our faith and sacrifice.

Let Freedom's Land rejoice!
Our ancient bonds are riven;
Once more to us the eternal choice
Of Good or Ill is given.

Not at a little cost,
Hardly by prayer or tears,
Shall we recover the road we lost
In the drugged and doubting years.

But, after the fires and the wrath,
But, after searching and pain,
His Mercy opens us a path
To live with ourselves again.

In the Gates of Death rejoice!
We see and hold the good—
Bear witness, Earth, we have made our choice
With Freedom's brotherhood!

Then praise the Lord Most High
  Whose Strength hath saved us whole,
Who bade us choose that the Flesh should die
  And not the living Soul!

To the God in Man displayed—
  Where'er we see that Birth,
Be love and understanding paid
  As never yet on earth!

To the Spirit that moves in Man,
  On Whom all worlds depend,
Be Glory since our world began
  And service to the end!

THE HOLY WAR

1917

'For here lay the excellent wisdom of him that built Mansoul, that the walls could never be broken down nor hurt by the most mighty adverse potentate unless the townsmen gave consent thereto.'—Bunyan's *Holy War.*

A TINKER out of Bedford,
A vagrant oft in quod,
A private under Fairfax,
A minister of God—
Two hundred years and thirty
Ere Armageddon came
His single hand portrayed it,
And Bunyan was his name!

He mapped for those who follow,
The world in which we are—
'This famous town of Mansoul'
That takes the Holy War.
Her true and traitor people,
The Gates along her wall,
From Eye Gate unto Feel Gate,
John Bunyan showed them all.

All enemy divisions,
Recruits of every class,

And highly screened positions
  For flame or poison-gas;
The craft that we call modern,
  The crimes that we call new—
John Bunyan had 'em typed and filed
  In Sixteen Eighty-two.

Likewise the Lords of Looseness
  That hamper faith and works,
The Perseverance-Doubters,
  And Present-Comfort shirks,
With brittle intellectuals
  Who crack beneath a strain—
John Bunyan met that helpful set
  In Charles the Second's reign.

Emmanuel's vanguard dying
  For right and not for rights,
My Lord Apollyon lying
  To the State-kept Stockholmites,
The Pope, the swithering Neutrals,
  The Kaiser and his Gott—
Their rôles, their goals, their naked souls—
  He knew and drew the lot.

Now he hath left his quarters,
  In Bunhill Fields to lie,
The wisdom that he taught us
  Is proven prophecy—
One watchword through our Armies,
  One answer from our Lands:—
'No dealings with Diabolus
  As long as Mansoul stands!'

A pedlar from a hovel,
The lowest of the low—
The Father of the Novel,
Salvation's first Defoe—
Eight blinded generations
Ere Armageddon came,
He showed us how to meet it,
And Bunyan was his name!

THE HOUSES

1898

A SONG OF THE DOMINIONS

'Twixt my house and thy house the pathway is broad,
In thy house or my house is half the world's hoard;
By my house and thy house hangs all the world's fate,
On thy house and my house lies half the world's hate.

For my house and thy house no help shall we find
Save thy house and my house—kin cleaving to kind;
If my house be taken, thine tumbleth anon.
If thy house be forfeit, mine followeth soon.

'Twixt my house and thy house what talk can there be
Of headship or lordship, or service or fee?
Since my house to thy house no greater can send
Than thy house to my house–friend comforting friend;
And thy house to my house no meaner can bring
Than my house to thy house—King counselling King!

RUSSIA TO THE PACIFISTS

1918

God rest you, peaceful gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
But—leave your sports a little while—the dead are borne this way!
Armies dead and Cities dead, past all count or care.
God rest you, merry gentlemen, what portent see you there?
Singing:—Break ground for a wearied host
That have no ground to keep.
Give them the rest that they covet most . . .
And who shall be next to sleep, good sirs,
In such a trench to sleep?

God rest you, peaceful gentlemen, but give us leave to pass.
We go to dig a nation's grave as great as England was.
For this Kingdom and this Glory and this Power and this Pride,
Three hundred years it flourished—in three hundred days it died.
Singing:—Pour oil for a frozen throng
That lie about the ways.
Give them the warmth they have lacked so long . . .
And what shall be next to blaze, good sirs,
On such a pyre to blaze?

God rest you, thoughtful gentlemen, and send your
sleep is light!
'Remains of this dominion no shadow, sound, or sight,
Except the sound of weeping and the sight of burning
fire,
And the shadow of a people that is trampled into mire.
Singing:—Break bread for a starving folk
That perish in the field.
Give them their food as they take the yoke . . .
And who shall be next to yield, good sirs,
For such a bribe to yield?

God rest you, merry gentlemen, and keep you in your
mirth!
Was ever Kingdom turned so soon to ashes, blood,
and earth?
'Twixt the summer and the snow—seeding-time and
frost—
Arms and victual, hope and counsel, name and country
lost!
Singing:—*Let down by the foot and the head—*
Shovel and smooth it all!
So do we bury a Nation dead . . .
And who shall be next to fall, good sirs,
With your good help to fall?

THE IRISH GUARDS

1918

WE'RE not so old in the Army List,
  But we're not so young at our trade,
For we had the honour at Fontenoy
  Of meeting the Guards' Brigade.
'Twas Lally, Dillon, Bulkeley, Clare,
  And Lee that led us then,
And after a hundred and seventy years
  We're fighting for France again!
    Old Days! The Wild Geese are flighting,
      Head to the storm as they faced it before!
    For where there are Irish there's bound to be fighting,
      And when there's no fighting, it's Ireland no more!
        Ireland no more!

The fashion's all for khaki now,
  But once through France we went
Full-dressed in scarlet Army cloth
  The English—left at Ghent.
They're fighting on our side to-day
  But, before they changed their clothes,
The half of Europe knew our fame,
  As all of Ireland knows!
    Old Days! The Wild Geese are flying,
      Head to the storm as they faced it before!
    For where there are Irish there's memory undying,
      And when we forget, it is Ireland no more!
        Ireland no more!

From Barry Wood to Gouzeaucourt,
From Boyne to Pilkem Ridge,
The ancient days come back no more
Than water under the bridge.
But the bridge it stands and the water runs
As red as yesterday,
And the Irish move to the sound of the guns
Like salmon to the sea.
Old Days! The Wild Geese are ranging,
Head to the storm as they faced it before!
For where there are Irish their hearts are unchanging,
And when they are changed, it is Ireland no more!
Ireland no more!

We're not so old in the Army List,
But we're not so new in the ring,
For we carried our packs with Marshal Saxe
When Louis was our King.
But Douglas Haig's our Marshal now
And we're King George's men,
And after one hundred and seventy years
We're fighting for France again!
Ah, France! And did we stand by you,
When life was made splendid with gifts and rewards?
Ah, France! And will we deny you
In the hour of your agony, Mother of Swords?
Old Days! The Wild Geese are flighting,
Head to the storm as they faced it before!
For where there are Irish there's loving and fighting,
And when we stop either, it's Ireland no more!
Ireland no more!

A NATIVITY

(1914–18)

THE Babe was laid in the Manger
Between the gentle kine—
All safe from cold and danger—
'But it was not so with mine,
(With mine! With mine!)
Is it well with the child, is it well?'
The waiting mother prayed.
'For I know not how he fell,
And I know not where he is laid.'

A Star stood forth in Heaven;
The Watchers ran to see
The Sign of the Promise given—
'But there comes no sign to me.
(To me! To me!)
My child died in the dark.
Is it well with the child, is it well?
There was none to tend him or mark,
And I know not how he fell.'

The Cross was raised on high;
The Mother grieved beside—
'But the Mother saw Him die
And took Him when he died.
(He died! He died!)
Seemly and undefiled
His burial-place was made—

Is it well, is it well with the child?
For I know not where he is laid.'

On the dawning of Easter Day
Comes Mary Magdalene;
But the Stone was rolled away,
And the Body was not within—
(Within! Within!)
'Ah, who will answer my word?'
The broken mother prayed.
'They have taken away my Lord,
And I know not where He is laid.'

. . . . . .

The Star stands forth in Heaven.
The Watchers watch in vain
For Sign of the Promise given
Of peace on Earth again—
(Again! Again)
'But I know for Whom he fell'—
The steadfast mother smiled.
'Is it well with the child—is it well?
It is well—it is well with the child!'

EN-DOR

(1914–19—?)

Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.—1 *Samuel* xxviii. 7.

THE road to En-dor is easy to tread
For Mother or yearning Wife.
There, it is sure, we shall meet our Dead
As they were even in life.
Earth has not dreamed of the blessing in store
For desolate hearts on the road to En-dor.

Whispers shall comfort us out of the dark—
Hands—ah, God!—that we knew!
Visions and voices—look and hark!—
Shall prove that the tale is true,
And that those who have passed to the further shore
May be hailed—at a price—on the road to En-dor.

But they are so deep in their new eclipse
Nothing they say can reach,
Unless it be uttered by alien lips
And framed in a stranger's speech.
The son must send word to the mother that bore
Through an hireling's mouth. 'Tis the rule of En-dor.

And not for nothing these gifts are shown
By such as delight our Dead.

They must twitch and stiffen and slaver and groan
  Ere the eyes are set in the head,
And the voice from the belly begins. Therefore
We pay them a wage where they ply at En-dor.

Even so, we have need of faith
  And patience to follow the clue.
Often, at first, what the dear one saith
  Is babble, or jest, or untrue.
(Lying spirits perplex us sore
Till our loves—and their lives—are well known at
    En-dor). . . .

Oh, the road to En-dor is the oldest road
  And the craziest road of all!
Straight it runs to the Witch's abode,
  As it did in the days of Saul.
And nothing has changed of the sorrow in store
For such as go down on the road to En-dor!

A RECANTATION

1917

TO LYDE OF THE MUSIC-HALLS

WHAT boots it on the Gods to call?
Since, answered or unheard,
We perish with the Gods and all
Things made—except the Word.

Ere certain Fate had touched a heart
By fifty years made cold,
I judged thee, Lyde, and thy art
O'erblown and over-bold.

But he—but he, of whom bereft
I suffer vacant days—
He on his shield not meanly left—
He cherished all thy lays.

Witness the magic coffer stocked
With convoluted runes
Wherein thy very voice was locked
And linked to circling tunes.

Witness thy portrait, smoke-defiled,
That decked his shelter-place.
Life seemed more present, wrote the child,
Beneath thy well-known face.

And when the grudging days restored
  Him for a breath to home,
He, with fresh crowds of youth, adored
  Thee making mirth in Rome.

Therefore, I, humble, join the hosts,
  Loyal and loud, who bow
To thee as Queen of Song—and ghosts,
  For I remember how

Never more rampant rose the Hall
  At thy audacious line
Than when the news came in from Gaul
  Thy son had—followed mine.

But thou didst hide it in thy breast
  And, capering, took the brunt
Of blaze and blare, and launched the jest
  That swept next week the Front.

Singer to children! Ours possessed
  Sleep before noon—but thee,
Wakeful each midnight for the rest,
  No holocaust shall free!

Yet they who use the Word assigned,
  To hearten and make whole,
Not less than Gods have served mankind,
  Though vultures rend their soul.

'MY BOY JACK'

(1914–18)

'HAVE you news of my boy Jack?'
Not this tide.
'When d'you think that he'll come back?'
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

'Has any one else had word of him?'
Not this tide.
For what is sunk will hardly swim,
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

'Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?'
None this tide,
Nor any tide,
Except he did not shame his kind—
Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,
This tide,
And every tide;
Because he was the son you bore,
And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

THE VERDICTS

(JUTLAND, 1916)

NOT in the thick of the fight,
  Not in the press of the odds,
Do the heroes come to their height,
  Or we know the demi-gods.

That stands over till peace.
  We can only perceive
Men returned from the seas,
  Very grateful for leave.

They grant us sudden days
  Snatched from their business of war;
But we are too close to appraise
  What manner of men they are.

And, whether their names go down
  With age-kept victories,
Or whether they battle and drown
  Unreckoned, is hid from our eyes.

They are too near to be great,
  But our children shall understand
When and how our fate
  Was changed, and by whose hand.

Our children shall measure their worth.
  We are content to be blind . . .
But we know that we walk on a new-born earth
  With the saviours of mankind.

MESOPOTAMIA

1917

THEY shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,
The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave:
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own dung,
Shall they come with years and honour to the grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men coldly slain
In sight of help denied from day to day:
But the men who edged their agonies and chid them in their pain,
Are they too strong and wise to put away?

Our dead shall not return to us while Day and Night divide—
Never while the bars of sunset hold.
But the idle-minded overlings who quibbled while they died,
Shall they thrust for high employments as of old?

Shall we only threaten and be angry for an hour?
When the storm is ended shall we find
How softly but how swiftly they have sidled back to power
By the favour and contrivance of their kind?

Even while they soothe us, while they promise large amends,
Even while they make a show of fear,

Do they call upon their debtors, and take counsel with
their friends,
To confirm and re-establish each career?

Their lives cannot repay us—their death could not
undo—
The shame that they have laid upon our race.
But the slothfulness that wasted and the arrogance
that slew,
Shall we leave it unabated in its place?

THE HYAENAS

After the burial-parties leave
  And the baffled kites have fled;
The wise hyaenas come out at eve
  To take account of our dead.

How he died and why he died
  Troubles them not a whit.
They snout the bushes and stones aside
  And dig till they come to it.

They are only resolute they shall eat
  That they and their mates may thrive;
And they know that the dead are safer meat
  Than the weakest thing alive.

(For a goat may butt, and a worm may sting,
  And a child will sometimes stand;
But a poor dead soldier of the King
  Can never lift a hand.)

They whoop and halloo and scatter the dirt
  Until their tushes white
Take good hold of the Army shirt,
  And tug the corpse to light.

And the pitiful face is shown again
  For an instant ere they close;
But it is not discovered to living men—
  Only to God and to those

Who, being soulless, are free from shame,
Whatever meat they may find.
Nor do they defile the dead man's name—
That is reserved for his kind.

THE SPIES' MARCH

1913

'The outbreak is in full swing and our death-rate would sicken Napoleon. . . . Dr. M—— died last week, and C—— on Monday, but some more medicines are coming. . . . We don't seem able to check it at all. . . Villages panicking badly. . . . In some places not a living soul. . . . But at any rate the experience gained may come in useful, so I am keeping my notes written up to date in case of accidents. . . . Death is a queer chap to live with for steady company.'—*Extract from a Private Letter from Manchuria.*

THERE are no leaders to lead us to honour, and yet
without leaders we sally;
Each man reporting for duty alone, out of sight, out
of reach, of his fellow.
There are no bugles to call the battalions, and yet with-
out bugles we rally
From the ends of the earth to the ends of the earth, to
follow the Standard of Yellow!
Fall in! Oh, fall in! Oh, fall in!

Not where the squadrons mass,
Not where the bayonets shine,
Not where the big shell shout as they pass
Over the firing-line;

Not where the wounded are,
  Not where the nations die,
Killed in the cleanly game of war—
  That is no place for a spy!
O Princes, Thrones and Powers, your work
      is less than ours—
  Here is no place for a spy!

Trained to another use,
  We march with colours furled,
Only concerned when Death breaks loose
  On a front of half a world.
Only for General Death
  The Yellow Flag may fly,
While we take post beneath—
  That is the place for a spy.
When Plague has spread his pinions over
      Nations and Dominions—
  Then will be work for a spy!

The dropping shots begin,
  The single funerals pass,
Our skirmishers run in,
  The corpses dot the grass!
The howling towns stampede,
  The tainted hamlets die.
Now it is war indeed—
  Now there is room for a spy!
O Peoples, Kings and Lands, we are waiting
      your commands—
  What is the work for a spy?
      (Drums)—'*Fear is upon us, spy!*

'Go where his pickets hide—
  Unmask the shapes they take,
Whether a gnat from the waterside,
  Or a stinging fly in the brake,
Or filth of the crowded street,
  Or a sick rat limping by,
Or a smear of spittle dried in the heat—
  That is the work for a spy!
    (Drums)—*Death is upon us, spy!*

What does he next prepare?
  Whence will he make attack?—
By water, earth or air?—
  How can we head him back?
Shall we starve him out if we burn
  Or bury his food-supply?
Slip through his lines and learn—
  That is the work for a spy!
    (Drums)—*Get to your business, spy!*

Does he feint or strike in force?
  Will he charge or ambuscade?
What is it checks his course?
  Is he beaten or only delayed?
How long will the lull endure?
  Is he retreating? Why?
Crawl to his camp and make sure—
  That is the work for a spy!
    (Drums)—*Fetch us our answer, spy!*

Ride with him girth to girth
  Wherever the Pale Horse wheels,

Wait on his councils, ear to earth,
  And show what the dust reveals.
For the smoke of our torment rolls
  Where the burning corpses lie;
What do we care for your bodies or souls?
  Bring us deliverance, spy!'

THE SONS OF MARTHA

1907

THE Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they have inherited that good part;
But the Sons of Martha favour their Mother of the careful soul and the troubled heart.
And because she lost her temper once, and because she was rude to the Lord her Guest,
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world without end, reprieve, or rest.

It is their care in all the ages to take the buffet and cushion the shock.
It is their care that the gear engages; it is their care that the switches lock.
It is their care that the wheels run truly; it is their care to embark and entrain,
Tally, transport, and deliver duly the Sons of Mary by land and main.

They say to mountains, 'Be ye removèd.' They say to the lesser floods, 'Be dry.'
Under their rods are the rocks reprovèd—they are not afraid of that which is high.
Then do the hill-tops shake to the summit—then is the bed of the deep laid bare,
That the Sons of Mary may overcome it, pleasantly sleeping and unaware.

They finger Death at their gloves' end where they
piece and repiece the living wires.
He rears against the gates they tend: they feed him
hungry behind their fires.
Early at dawn, ere men see clear, they stumble into
his terrible stall,
And hale him forth like a haltered steer, and goad and
turn him till evenfall.

To these from birth is Belief forbidden; from these till
death is Relief afar.
They are concerned with matters hidden—under the
earth-line their altars are—
The secret fountains to follow up, waters withdrawn
to restore to the mouth,
And gather the floods as in a cup, and pour them again
at a city's drouth.

They do not preach that their God will rouse them a
little before the nuts work loose.
They do not teach that His Pity allows them to drop
their job when they dam'-well choose.
As in the thronged and the lighted ways, so in the dark
and the desert they stand,
Wary and watchful all their days that their brethren's
days may be long in the land.

Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood to make a path
more fair or flat—
Lo, it is black already with blood some Son of Martha
spilled for that!

Not as a ladder from earth to Heaven, not as a witness
to any creed,
But simple service simply given to his own kind in
their common need.

And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessèd—they
know the Angels are on their side.
They know in them is the Grace confessèd, and for
them are the Mercies multiplied.
They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they see
how truly the Promise runs.
They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and—the
Lord He lays it on Martha's Sons!

MARY'S SON

1911

If you stop to find out what your wages will be
  And how they will clothe and feed you,
Willie, my son, don't you go on the Sea,
  For the Sea will never need you.

If you ask for the reason of every command,
  And argue with people about you,
Willie, my son, don't you go on the Land,
  For the Land will do better without you.

If you stop to consider the work you have done
  And to boast what your labour is worth, dear,
Angels may come for you, Willie, my son,
  But you'll never be wanted on Earth, dear!

THE SONG OF THE LATHES

1918

Being the words of the tune hummed at her lathe by Mrs. L. Embsay, widow.

THE fans and the beltings they roar round me.
The power is shaking the floor round me
Till the lathes pick up their duty and the midnight-shift takes over.
It is good for me to be here!

Guns in Flanders—Flanders guns!
(I had a man that worked 'em once!)
Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders!
Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders!
Shells for guns in Flanders! Feed the guns!

The cranes and the carriers they boom over me,
The bays and the galleries they loom over me,
With their quarter-mile of pillars growing little in the distance—
It is good for me to be here!

The Zeppelins and Gothas they raid over us.
Our lights give warning, and fade over us.
(Seven thousand women keeping quiet in the darkness!)
Oh, it's good for me to be here!

The roofs and the buildings they grow round me,
Eating up the fields I used to know round me;
And the shed that I began in is a sub-inspector's office—
So long have I been here!

I've seen six hundred mornings make our lamps grow dim
Through the bit that isn't painted round our skylight-rim,
And the sunshine through the window slope according to the seasons,
Twice since I've been here.

The trains on the sidings they call to us
With the hundred thousand blanks that they haul to us;
And we send 'em what we've finished, and they take it where it's wanted,
For that is why we are here!

Man's hate passes as his love will pass.
God made Woman what she always was.
Them that bear the burden they will never grant forgiveness
So long as they are here!

Once I was a woman, but that's by with me.
All I loved and looked for, it must die with me.
But the Lord has left me over for a servant of the Judgment,
And I serve His Judgments here!

Guns in Flanders—Flanders guns!
(I had a son that worked 'em once!)
Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders!
Shells for guns in Flanders, Flanders!
Shells for guns in Flanders! Feed the guns!

GETHSEMANE

(1914–18)

THE Garden called Gethsemane,
In Picardy it was,
And there the people came to see
The English soldiers pass.
We used to pass—we used to pass
Or halt, as it might be,
And ship our masks in case of gas
Beyond Gethsemane.

The Garden called Gethsemane,
It held a pretty lass,
But all the time she talked to me
I prayed my cup might pass.
The officer sat on the chair,
The men lay on the grass,
And all the time we halted there
I prayed my cup might pass.

It didn't pass—it didn't pass—
It didn't pass from me.
I drank it when we met the gas
Beyond Gethsemane!

THE PRO-CONSULS

(LORD MILNER)

THE over-faithful sword returns the user
His heart's desire at price of his heart's blood.
The clamour of the arrogant accuser
Wastes that one hour we needed to make good.
This was foretold of old at our outgoing;
This we accepted who have squandered, knowing,
The strength and glory of our reputations,
At the day's need, as it were dross, to guard
The tender and new-dedicate foundations
Against the sea we fear—not man's award.

They that dig foundations deep,
  Fit for realms to rise upon,
Little honour do they reap
  Of their generation,
Any more than mountains gain
Stature till we reach the plain.

With no veil before their face
  Such as shroud or sceptre lend—
Daily in the market-place,
  Of one height to foe and friend—
They must cheapen self to find
Ends uncheapened for mankind.

Through the night when hirelings rest,
  Sleepless they arise, alone,
The unsleeping arch to test
  And the o'er-trusted corner-stone,

'Gainst the need, they know, that lies
Hid behind the centuries.

Not by lust of praise or show,
  Not by Peace herself betrayed—
Peace herself must they forgo
  Till that peace be fitly made;
And in single strength uphold
Wearier hands and hearts acold.

On the stage their act hath framed
  For thy sports, O Liberty!
Doubted are they, and defamed
  By the tongues their act set free,
While they quicken, tend and raise
Power that must their power displace.

Lesser men feign greater goals,
  Failing whereof they may sit
Scholarly to judge the souls
  That go down into the Pit,
And, despite its certain clay,
Heave a new world towards the day.

These at labour make no sign,
  More than planets, tides or years
Which discover God's design,
  Not our hopes and not our fears;
Not in aught they gain or lose
Seek a triumph or excuse!

For, so the Ark be borne to Zion, who
Heeds how they perished or were paid that bore it?
For, so the Shrine abide, what shame—what pride—
If we, the priests, were bound or crowned before it?

THE CRAFTSMAN

ONCE, after long-drawn revel at The Mermaid,
He to the overbearing Boanerges,
Jonson, uttered (if half of it were liquor,
Blessed be the vintage!)

Saying how, at an alehouse under Cotswold,
He had made sure of his very Cleopatra
Drunk with enormous, salvation-contemning
Love for a tinker.

How, while he hid from Sir Thomas's keepers,
Crouched in a ditch and drenched by the midnight
Dews, he had listened to gipsy Juliet
Rail at the dawning.

How, at Bankside, a boy drowning kittens
Winced at the business; whereupon his sister—
Lady Macbeth aged seven—thrust 'em under,
Sombrely scornful.

How on a Sabbath, hushed and compassionate—
She being known since her birth to the townsfolk—
Stratford dredged and delivered from Avon
Dripping Ophelia.

So, with a thin third finger marrying
Drop to wine-drop domed on the table,

Shakespeare opened his heart till the sunrise
Entered to hear him.

London waked and he, imperturbable,
Passed from waking to hurry after shadows . .
Busied upon shows of no earthly importance?
Yes, but he knew it!

THINGS AND THE MAN

1904

IN MEMORIAM
JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.—*Genesis* xxxvii. 5.

O YE who hold the written clue
  To all save all unwritten things,
And, half a league behind, pursue
  The Accomplished Fact with flouts and flings,
  Look! To your knee your baby brings
    The oldest tale since Earth began—
  The answer to your worryings:—
    '*Once on a time there was a Man.*'

He, single-handed, met and slew
  Magicians, Armies, Ogres, Kings.
He lonely 'mid his doubting crew—
  'In all the loneliness of wings'—
  He fed the flame, he filled the springs,
    He locked the ranks, he launched the van
  Straight at the grinning Teeth of Things.
    '*Once on a time there was a Man.*'

The peace of shocked Foundations flew
  Before his ribald questionings.

He broke the Oracles in two,
And bared the paltry wires and strings.
He headed desert wanderings;
He led his soul, his cause, his clan
A little from the ruck of Things.
'Once on a time there was a Man.'

Thrones, Powers, Dominions block the view
With episodes and underlings—
The meek historian deems them true
Nor heeds the song that Clio sings—
The simple central truth that stings
The mob to boo, the priest to ban:
Things never yet created things—
'Once on a time there was a Man.'

A bolt is fallen from the blue.
A wakened realm full-circle swings
Where Dothan's dreamer dreams anew
Of vast and far-borne harvestings;
And unto him an Empire clings
That grips the purpose of his plan.
My Lords, how think you of these things?
Once—in our time—is there a Man?

THE BENEFACTORS

AH! What avails the classic bent
And what the cultured word,
Against the undoctored incident
That actually occurred?

And what is Art whereto we press
Through paint and prose and rhyme—
When Nature in her nakedness
Defeats us every time?

It is not learning, grace nor gear,
Nor easy meat and drink,
But bitter pinch of pain and fear
That makes creation think.

When in this world's unpleasing youth
Our godlike race began,
The longest arm, the sharpest tooth,
Gave man control of man;

Till, bruised and bitten to the bone
And taught by pain and fear,
He learned to deal the far-off stone,
And poke the long, safe spear.

So tooth and nail were obsolete
As means against a foe,
Till, bored by uniform defeat,
Some genius built the bow.

Then stone and javelin proved as vain
As old-time tooth and nail,
Till, spurred anew by fear and pain,
Man fashioned coats of mail.

Then was there safety for the rich
And danger for the poor,
Till someone mixed a powder which
Redressed the scale once more.

Helmet and armour disappeared
With sword and bow and pike,
And, when the smoke of battle cleared,
All men were armed alike. . . .

And when ten million such were slain
To please one crazy King,
Man, schooled in bulk by fear and pain,
Grew weary of the thing;

And, at the very hour designed
To enslave him past recall,
His tooth-stone-arrow-gun-shy mind
Turned and abolished all.

All Power, each Tyrant, every Mob
Whose head has grown too large,
Ends by destroying its own job
And works its own discharge;

And Man, whose mere necessities
Move all things from his path,
Trembles meanwhile at their decrees,
And deprecates their wrath!

THE DEAD KING

(EDWARD VII.)

1910

WHO in the Realm to-day lays down dear life for the sake
of a land more dear?
And, unconcerned for his own estate, toils till the last
grudged sands have run?
Let him approach. It is proven here
Our King asks nothing of any man more than Our King
himself has done.

For to him, above all, was Life good, above all he commanded
Her abundance full-handed.
The peculiar treasure of Kings was his for the taking.
All that men come to in dreams he inherited waking:—

His marvel of world-gathered armies—one heart and all races;
His seas 'neath his keels when his war-castles foamed to their places;
The thundering foreshores that answered his heralded landing;
The huge lighted cities adoring, the assemblies upstanding;
The Councils of Kings called in haste to learn how he was minded—
The Kingdoms, the Powers, and the Glories he dealt with unblinded!

To him came all captains of men, all achievers of glory,
Hot from the press of their battles they told him their story.
They revealed him their lives in an hour and, saluting, departed,
Joyful to labour afresh—he had made them new-hearted.
And, since he weighed men from his youth, and no lie long deceived him,
He spoke and exacted the truth, and the basest believed him.

And God poured him an exquisite wine that was daily renewed to him,
In the clear-welling love of his peoples which daily accrued to him.
Honour and service we gave him, rejoicingly fearless;
Faith absolute, trust beyond speech and a friendship as peerless,
And since he was Master and Servant in all that we asked him,
We leaned hard on his wisdom in all things, knowing not how we tasked him.

For on him each new day laid command, every tyrannous hour,
To confront, or confirm, or make smooth some dread issue of power;
To deliver true judgment aright on the instant, unaided,
In the strict, level, ultimate phrase that allowed or dissuaded;

To foresee, to allay, to avert from us perils unnumbered,
To stand guard on our gates when he guessed that the watchmen had slumbered;
To win time, to turn hate, to woo folly to service, and, mightily schooling
His strength to the use of his Nations, to rule as not ruling.
These were the works of our King; Earth's peace was the proof of them.
God gave him great works to fulfil, and to us the behoof of them.

We accepted his toil as our right—none spared, none excused him.
When he was bowed by his burden his rest was refused him.
We troubled his age with our weakness—the blacker our shame to us!
Hearing his People had need of him, straightway he came to us.

As he received so he gave—nothing grudged, naught denying;
Not even the last gasp of his breath when he strove for us, dying.
For our sakes, without question, he put from him all that he cherished.
Simply as any that serve him he served and he perished.
All that Kings covet was his, and he flung it aside for us.
Simply as any that die in his service he died for us!

Who in the Realm to-day has choice of the easy road or the hard to tread?
And, much concerned for his own estate, would sell his soul to remain in the sun?
Let him depart nor look on Our dead.
Our King asks nothing of any man more than Our King himself has done.

A DEATH-BED

1918

'THIS is the State above the Law.
The State exists for the State alone.'
[*This is a gland at the back of the jaw,*
And an answering lump on the collar-bone.]

Some die shouting in gas or fire;
Some die silent, by shell and shot.
Some die desperate, caught on the wire;
Some die suddenly. This will not.

'Regis suprema Voluntas lex'—
[*It will follow the regular course of—throats.*]
Some die pinned by the broken decks,
Some die sobbing between the boats.

Some die eloquent, pressed to death
By the sliding trench, as their friends can hear.
Some die wholly in half a breath.
Some—give trouble for half a year.

'There is neither Evil nor Good in life
Except as the needs of the State ordain.'
[*Since it is rather too late for the knife,*
All we can do is to mask the pain.]

Some die saintly in faith and hope—
One died thus in a prison-yard—

Some die broken by rape or the rope;
  Some die easily. This dies hard.

'I will dash to pieces who bar my way.
  Woe to the traitor! Woe to the weak!'
[*Let him write what he wishes to say.*
  It tires him out if he tries to speak.]

Some die quietly. Some abound
  In loud self-pity. Others spread
Bad morale through the cots around . . .
  This is a type that is better dead.

'The war was forced on me by my foes.
  All that I sought was the right to live.'
[*Don't be afraid of a triple dose;*
  The pain will neutralize half we give.

Here are the needles. See that he dies
  While the effects of the drug endure. . . .
What is the question he asks with his eyes?—
  Yes, All-Highest, to God, be sure.]

GEHAZI

1915

WHENCE comest thou, Gehazi,
So reverend to behold,
In scarlet and in ermines
And chain of England's gold?
'From following after Naaman
To tell him all is well,
Whereby my zeal hath made me
A Judge in Israel.'

Well done, well done, Gehazi,
Stretch forth thy ready hand.
Thou barely 'scaped from judgment,
Take oath to judge the land
Unswayed by gift of money
Or privy bribe, more base,
Of knowledge which is profit
In any market-place.

Search out and probe, Gehazi,
As thou of all canst try,
The truthful, well-weighed answer
That tells the blacker lie—
The loud, uneasy virtue,
The anger feigned at will,
To overbear a witness
And make the Court keep still.

Take order now, Gehazi,
That no man talk aside
In secret with his judges
The while his case is tried.
Lest he should show them—reason
To keep a matter hid,
And subtly lead the questions
Away from what he did.

Thou mirror of uprightness,
What ails thee at thy vows?
What means the risen whiteness
Of the skin between thy brows?
The boils that shine and burrow,
The sores that slough and bleed—
The leprosy of Naaman
On thee and all thy seed?
Stand up, stand up, Gehazi,
Draw close thy robe and go,
Gehazi, Judge in Israel,
A leper white as snow!

THE VIRGINITY

TRY as he will, no man breaks wholly loose
From his first love, no matter who she be.
Oh, was there ever sailor free to choose,
That didn't settle somewhere near the sea?

Myself, it don't excite me nor amuse
To watch a pack o' shipping on the sea;
But I can understand my neighbour's views
From certain things which have occurred to me.

Men must keep touch with things they used to use
To earn their living, even when they are free;
And so come back upon the least excuse—
'Same as the sailor settled near the sea.

He knows he's never going on no cruise—
He knows he's done and finished with the sea;
And yet he likes to feel she's there to use—
If he should ask her—as she used to be.

Even though she cost him all he had to lose,
Even though she made him sick to hear or see,
Still, what she left of him will mostly choose
Her skirts to sit by. How comes such to be?

Parsons in pulpits, tax-payers in pews,
Kings on your thrones, you know as well as me,
We've only one virginity to lose,
And where we lost it there our hearts will be!

A PILGRIM'S WAY

I DO not look for holy saints to guide me on my way,
Or male and female devilkins to lead my feet astray.
If these are added, I rejoice—if not, I shall not mind,
So long as I have leave and choice to meet my fellow-kind.
For as we come and as we go (and deadly-soon go we!)
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

Thus I will honour pious men whose virtue shines so bright
(Though none are more amazed than I when I by chance do right),
And I will pity foolish men for woe their sins have bred
(Though ninety-nine per cent. of mine I brought on my own head).
And, Amorite or Eremite, or General Averagee,
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

And when they bore me overmuch, I will not shake mine ears,
Recalling many thousand such whom I have bored to tears.
And when they labour to impress, I will not doubt nor scoff;

Since I myself have done no less and—sometimes pulled it off.
Yea, as we are and we are not, and we pretend to be,
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

And when they work me random wrong, as oftentimes hath been,
I will not cherish hate too long (my hands are none too clean).
And when they do me random good, I will not feign surprise,
No more than those whom I have cheered with wayside courtesies.
But, as we give and as we take—whate'er our takings be—
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare
There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare
Till I have proved that Heaven and Hell which in our hearts we have
Show nothing irredeemable on either side the grave.
For as we live and as we die—if utter Death there be—
The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for me!

Deliver me from every pride—the Middle, High, and Low—

That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride
he show.
And purge me from all heresies of thought and speech
and pen
That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged.
Amen!
That I may sing of Crowd or King or road-borne
company,
That I may labour in my day, vocation and degree,
To prove the same by deed and name, and hold un-
shakenly
(Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my neigh-
bour be)
This single faith in Life and Death, and to Eternity:
'The people, Lord, Thy people, are good enough for
me!'

THE OLDEST SONG

'For before Eve was Lilith.'—*Old Tale.*

'THESE were never your true love's eyes.
  Why do you feign that you love them?
You that broke from their constancies,
  And the wide calm brows above them!

This was never your true love's speech.
  Why do you thrill when you hear it?
You that have ridden out of its reach
  The width of the world or near it!

This was never your true love's hair,—
  You that chafed when it bound you
Screened from knowledge or shame or care,
  In the night that it made around you!'

'All these things I know, I know.
  And that's why my heart is breaking!'
'Then what do you gain by pretending so?'
  '*The joy of an old wound waking.*'

NATURAL THEOLOGY

PRIMITIVE

I ATE my fill of a whale that died
  And stranded after a month at sea. . . .
There is a pain in my inside.
  Why have the Gods afflicted me?
Ow! I am purged till I am a wraith!
  Wow! I am sick till I cannot see!
What is the sense of Religion and Faith?
  Look how the Gods have afflicted me!

PAGAN

How can the skin of rat or mouse hold
  Anything more than a harmless flea? . . .
The burning plague has taken my household.
  Why have my Gods afflicted me?
All my kith and kin are deceased,
  Though they were as good as good could be.
I will out and batter the family priest,
  Because my Gods have afflicted me!

MEDIAEVAL

My privy and well drain into each other
  After the custom of Christendie. . . .
Fevers and fluxes are wasting my mother.
  Why has the Lord afflicted me?
The Saints are helpless for all I offer—
  So are the clergy I used to fee.

Henceforward I keep my cash in my coffer,
  Because the Lord has afflicted me.

MATERIAL

I run eight hundred hens to the acre.
  They die by dozens mysteriously. . . .
I am more than doubtful concerning my
      Maker.
  Why has the Lord afflicted me?
What a return for all my endeavour—
  Not to mention the L. S. D.!
I am an atheist now and for ever,
  Because this God has afflicted me!

PROGRESSIVE

Money spent on an Army or Fleet
  Is homicidal lunacy. . . .
My son has been killed in the Mons retreat.
  Why is the Lord afflicting me?
Why are murder, pillage and arson
  And rape allowed by the Deity?
I will write to *The Times*, deriding our parson,
  Because my God has afflicted me.

CHORUS

We had a kettle: we let it leak:
  Our not repairing it made it worse.
We haven't had any tea for a week. . . .
  The bottom is out of the Universe!

CONCLUSION

This was none of the good Lord's pleasure,
  For the Spirit He breathed in Man is free;
But what comes after is measure for measure
  And not a God that afflicteth thee.
As was the sowing so the reaping
  Is now and evermore shall be.
Thou art delivered to thine own keeping.
  Only Thyself hath afflicted thee!

A SONG AT COCK-CROW

1918

'Ille autem iterum negavit'

THE first time that Peter denièd his Lord
He shrank from the cudgel, the scourge and the cord,
But followed far off to see what they would do,
Till the cock crew—till the cock crew—
After Gethsemane, till the cock crew!

The first time that Peter denièd his Lord
'Twas only a maid in the palace who heard,
As he sat by the fire and warmed himself through.
Then the cock crew! Then the cock crew!
('Thou also art one of them.') Then the cock crew!

The first time that Peter denièd his Lord
He had neither the Throne, nor the Keys nor the Sword—
A poor silly fisherman, what could he do,
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—
But weep for his wickedness when the cock crew?

. . . . . .

The next time that Peter denièd his Lord
He was Fisher of Men, as foretold by the Word,
With the Crown on his brow and the Cross on his shoe,
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—
In Flanders and Picardy when the cock crew!

The next time that Peter denièd his Lord
'Twas Mary the Mother in Heaven Who heard,
And She grieved for the maidens and wives that they slew
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—
At Tirmonde and Aerschot when the cock crew!

The next time that Peter denièd his Lord
The Babe in the Manger awakened and stirred,
And He stretched out His arms for the playmates He knew—
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—
But the waters had covered them when the cock crew!

The next time that Peter denièd his Lord
'Twas Earth in her agony waited his word,
But he sat by the fire and naught would he do,
Though the cock crew—though the cock crew—
Over all Christendom, though the cock crew!

The last time that Peter denièd his Lord
The Father took from him the Keys and the Sword,
And the Mother and Babe brake his Kingdom in two,
When the cock crew—when the cock crew—
(*Because of his wickedness*) *when the cock crew!*

THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

1911

WHEN the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his pride,
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside.
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail.
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When Nag the basking cobra hears the careless foot of man,
He will sometimes wriggle sideways and avoid it if he can.
But his mate makes no such motion where she camps beside the trail.
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

When the early Jesuit fathers preached to Hurons and Choctaws,
They prayed to be delivered from the vengeance of the squaws.
'Twas the women, not the warriors, turned those stark enthusiasts pale.
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man's timid heart is bursting with the things he must not say,
For the Woman that God gave him isn't his to give away;
But when hunter meets with husband, each confirms the other's tale—
The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Man, a bear in most relations—worm and savage otherwise,—
Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the compromise.
Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of a fact
To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act.

Fear, or foolishness, impels him, ere he lay the wicked low,
To concede some form of trial even to his fiercest foe.
Mirth obscene diverts his anger—Doubt and Pity oft perplex
Him in dealing with an issue—to the scandal of The Sex!

But the Woman that God gave him, every fibre of her frame
Proves her launched for one sole issue, armed and engined for the same;
And to serve that single issue, lest the generations fail,
The female of the species must be deadlier than the male.

She who faces death by torture for each life beneath
her breast
May not deal in doubt or pity—must not swerve for
fact or jest.
These be purely male diversions—not in these her
honour dwells.
She the Other Law we live by, is that Law and nothing
else.

She can bring no more to living than the powers that
make her great
As the Mother of the Infant and the Mistress of the
Mate!
And when Babe and Man are lacking and she strides
unclaimed to claim
Her right as femme (and baron), her equipment is the
same.

She is wedded to convictions—in default of grosser
ties;
Her contentions are her children, Heaven help him
who denies!—
He will meet no suave discussion, but the instant,
white-hot, wild,
Wakened female of the species warring as for spouse
and child.

Unprovoked and awful charges—even so the she-bear
fights;
Speech that drips, corrodes, and poisons—even so the
cobra bites;
Scientific vivisection of one nerve till it is raw

And the victim writhes in anguish—like the Jesuit with the squaw!

So it comes that Man, the coward, when he gathers to confer
With his fellow-braves in council, dare not leave a place for her
Where, at war with Life and Conscience, he uplifts his erring hands
To some God of Abstract Justice—which no woman understands.

And Man knows it! Knows, moreover, that the Woman that God gave him
Must command but may not govern—shall enthral but not enslave him.
And *She* knows, because She warns him, and Her instincts never fail,
That the Female of Her Species is more deadly than the Male!

EPITAPHS OF THE WAR

(1914–18)

'EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE'

A. 'I was a "have."' *B.* 'I was a "have-not."'
(*Together*). 'What hast thou given which I gave not?'

A SERVANT

We were together since the War began.
He was my servant—and the better man.

A SON

My son was killed while laughing at some jest.
I would I knew
What it was, and it might serve me in a time when
jests are few.

AN ONLY SON

I have slain none except my Mother. She
(Blessing her slayer) died of grief for me.

EX-CLERK

Pity not! The Army gave
Freedom to a timid slave:
In which Freedom did he find
Strength of body, will, and mind:

By which strength he came to prove
Mirth, Companionship, and Love:
For which Love to Death he went:
In which Death he lies content.

THE WONDER

Body and Spirit I surrendered whole
To harsh Instructors—and received a soul . . .
If mortal man could change me through and through
From all I was—what may The God not do?

HINDU SEPOY IN FRANCE

This man in his own country prayed we know not to
what Powers.
We pray Them to reward him for his bravery in ours.

THE COWARD

I could not look on Death, which being known,
Men led me to him, blindfold and alone.

SHOCK

My name, my speech, my self I had forgot.
My wife and children came—I knew them not.
I died. My Mother followed. At her call
And on her bosom I remembered all.

A GRAVE NEAR CAIRO

Gods of the Nile, should this stout fellow here
Get out—get out! He knows not shame nor fear.

PELICANS IN THE WILDERNESS

A Grave near Halfa

The blown sand heaps on me, that none may learn
  Where I am laid for whom my children grieve. . . .
O wings that beat at dawning, ye return
  Out of the desert to your young at eve!

CANADIANS

We, giving all, gained all.
  Neither lament us nor praise;
Only, in all things recall,
  It is fear, not death, that slays.

INSCRIPTION ON MEMORIAL IN SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

From little towns in a far land, we came
To save our honour, and a world aflame;
By little towns in a far land, we sleep
And trust those things we won, to you to keep.

THE FAVOUR

Death favoured me from the first, well knowing I
    could not endure
  To wait on him day by day. He quitted my betters
    and came
Whistling over the fields, and, when he had made all
    sure,
  'Thy line is at end,' he said, 'but at least I have saved
    its name.'

EPITAPHS OF THE WAR

THE BEGINNER

On the first hour of my first day
In the front trench I fell.
(Children in boxes at a play
Stand up to watch it well.)

R. A. F. (AGED EIGHTEEN)

Laughing through clouds, his milk-teeth still unshed,
Cities and men he smote from overhead.
His deaths delivered, he returned to play
Childlike, with childish things now put away.

THE REFINED MAN

I was of delicate mind. I went aside for my needs,
Disdaining the common office. I was seen from
afar and killed. . . .
How is this matter for mirth? Let each man be judged
by his deeds.
*I have paid my price to live with myself on the terms
that I willed.*

NATIVE WATER-CARRIER (M. E. F.)

Prometheus brought down fire to men.
This brought up water.
The Gods are jealous—now, as then,
Giving no quarter.

BOMBED IN LONDON

On land and sea I strove with anxious care
To escape conscription. It was in the air!

THE SLEEPY SENTINEL

Faithless the watch that I kept: now I have none to keep.
I was slain because I slept: now I am slain I sleep.
Let no man reproach me again, whatever watch is unkept—
I sleep because I am slain. They slew me because I slept.

BATTERIES OUT OF AMMUNITION

If any mourn us in the workshop, say
We died because the shift kept holiday.

COMMON FORM

If any question why we died,
Tell them, because our fathers lied.

A DEAD STATESMAN

I could not dig: I dared not rob:
Therefore I lied to please the mob.
Now all my lies are proved untrue
And I must face the men I slew.
What tale shall save me here among
Mine angry and defrauded young?

THE REBEL

If I had clamoured at Thy Gate
For gift of Life on Earth,
And, thrusting through the souls that wait,
Flung headlong into birth—

Even then, even then, for gin and snare
About my pathway spread,
Lord, I had mocked Thy thoughtful care
Before I joined the Dead!
But now? . . . I was beneath Thy Hand
Ere yet the Planets came.
And now—though Planets pass, I stand
The witness to Thy shame!

THE OBEDIENT

Daily, though no ears attended,
Did my prayers arise.
Daily, though no fire descended,
Did I sacrifice. . . .
Though my darkness did not lift,
Though I faced no lighter odds,
Though the Gods bestowed no gift,
None the less,
None the less, I served the Gods!

A DRIFTER OFF TARENTUM

He from the wind-bitten North with ship and companions descended,
Searching for eggs of death spawned by invisible hulls.
Many he found and drew forth. Of a sudden the fishery ended
In flame and a clamorous breath known to the eye-pecking gulls.

DESTROYERS IN COLLISION

For Fog and Fate no charm is found
To lighten or amend.
I, hurrying to my bride, was drowned—
Cut down by my best friend.

CONVOY ESCORT

I was a shepherd to fools
Causelessly bold or afraid.
They would not abide by my rules.
Yet they escaped. For I stayed.

UNKNOWN FEMALE CORPSE

Headless, lacking foot and hand,
Horrible I come to land.
I beseech all women's sons
Know I was a mother once.

RAPED AND REVENGED

One used and butchered me: another spied
Me broken—for which thing an hundred died.
So it was learned among the heathen hosts
How much a freeborn woman's favour costs.

SALONIKAN GRAVE

I have watched a thousand days
Push out and crawl into night
Slowly as tortoises.
Now I, too, follow these.
It is fever, and not the fight—
Time, not battle,—that slays.

THE BRIDEGROOM

Call me not false, beloved,
  If, from thy scarce-known breast
So little time removed,
  In other arms I rest.

For this more ancient bride,
  Whom coldly I embrace,
Was constant at my side
  Before I saw thy face.

Our marriage, often set—
  By miracle delayed—
At last is consummate,
  And cannot be unmade.

Live, then, whom Life shall cure,
  Almost, of Memory,
And leave us to endure
  Its immortality.

V. A. D. (MEDITERRANEAN)

Ah, would swift ships had never been, for then we
  ne'er had found,
These harsh Aegean rocks between, this little virgin
  drowned,
Whom neither spouse nor child shall mourn, but men
  she nursed through pain
And—certain keels for whose return the heathen look
  in vain.

ACTORS

On a Memorial Tablet in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon

We counterfeited once for your disport
  Men's joy and sorrow: but our day has passed.
We pray you pardon all where we fell short—
  Seeing we were your servants to this last.

JOURNALISTS

On a Panel in the Hall of the Institute of Journalists

We have served our day

'THE CITY OF BRASS'

1909

'Here was a people whom after their works thou shalt see wept over for their lost dominion: and in this palace is the last information respecting lords collected in the dust.'—*The Arabian Nights.*

IN a land that the sand overlays—the ways to her gates are untrod—
A multitude ended their days whose fates were made splendid by God,
Till they grew drunk and were smitten with madness and went to their fall,
And of these is a story written: but Allah Alone knoweth all!

When the wine stirred in their hearts their bosoms dilated,
They rose to suppose themselves kings over all things created—
To decree a new earth at a birth without labour or sorrow—
To declare: 'We prepare it to-day and inherit to-morrow.'
They chose themselves prophets and priests of minute understanding,
Men swift to see done, and outrun, their extremest commanding—

Of the tribe which describe with a jibe the perversions of Justice—
Panders avowed to the crowd whatsoever its lust is.

Swiftly these pulled down the walls which their fathers had made them—
The impregnable ramparts of old, they razed and re-laid them
As playgrounds of pleasure and leisure, with limitless entries,
And havens of rest for the wastrels where once walked the sentries;
And because there was need of more pay for the shouters and marchers,
They disbanded in face of their foemen their yeomen and archers.
They replied to their well-wishers' fears—to their enemies' laughter,
Saying: 'Peace! We have fashioned a God Which shall save us hereafter.
We ascribe all dominion to man in his factions conferring,
And have given to numbers the Name of the Wisdom unerring.'

They said: 'Who has hate in his soul? Who has envied his neighbour?
Let him arise and control both that man and his labour.'
They said: 'Who is eaten by sloth? Whose unthrift has destroyed him?
He shall levy a tribute from all because none have employed him.'

They said: 'Who hath toiled, who hath striven, and gathered possession?
Let him be spoiled. He hath given full proof of transgression.'
They said: 'Who is irked by the Law? *Though we may not remove it,*
If he lend us his aid in this raid, we will set him above it!'
So the robber did judgment again upon such as displeased him,
The slayer, too, boasted his slain, and the judges released him.

As for their kinsmen far off, on the skirts of the nation,
They harried all earth to make sure none escaped reprobation.
They awakened unrest for a jest in their newly-won borders,
And jeered at the blood of their brethren betrayed by their orders.
They instructed the ruled to rebel, their rulers to aid them;
And, since such as obeyed them not fell, their Viceroys obeyed them.
When the riotous set them at naught they said: 'Praise the upheaval!
For the show and the word and the thought of Dominion is evil!'

They unwound and flung from them with rage, as a rag that defiled them,
The imperial gains of the age which their forefathers piled them.

They ran panting in haste to lay waste and embitter
for ever
The wellsprings of Wisdom and Strength which are
Faith and Endeavour.
They nosed out and digged up and dragged forth and
exposed to derision
All doctrine of purpose and worth and restraint and
prevision:

And it ceased, and God granted them all things for
which they had striven,
And the heart of a beast in the place of a man's heart
was given. . . .

. . . . . .

When they were fullest of wine and most flagrant in
error,
Out of the sea rose a sign—out of Heaven a terror.
Then they saw, then they heard, then they knew—for
none troubled to hide it,
An host had prepared their destruction, but still they
denied it.
They denied what they dared not abide if it came to
the trial;
But the Sword that was forged while they lied did not
heed their denial.
It drove home, and no time was allowed to the crowd
that was driven.
The preposterous-minded were cowed—they thought
time would be given.
There was no need of a steed nor a lance to pursue
them;

It was decreed their own deed, and not chance, should
undo them.
The tares they had laughingly sown were ripe to the
reaping.
The trust they had leagued to disown was removed
from their keeping.
The eaters of other men's bread, the exempted from
hardship,
The excusers of impotence fled, abdicating their war-
ship,
For the hate they had taught through the State brought
the State no defender,
And it passed from the roll of the Nations in headlong
surrender!

JUSTICE

OCTOBER 1918

ACROSS a world where all men grieve
And grieving strive the more,
The great days range like tides and leave
Our dead on every shore.
Heavy the load we undergo,
And our own hands prepare,
If we have parley with the foe,
The load our sons must bear.

Before we loose the word
That bids new worlds to birth,
Needs must we loosen first the sword
Of Justice upon earth;
Or else all else is vain
Since life on earth began,
And the spent world sinks back again
Hopeless of God and Man.

A people and their King
Through ancient sin grown strong,
Because they feared no reckoning
Would set no bound to wrong;
But now their hour is past,
And we who bore it find
Evil Incarnate held at last
To answer to mankind.

For agony and spoil
  Of nations beat to dust,
For poisoned air and tortured soil
  And cold, commanded lust,
And every secret woe
  The shuddering waters saw—
Willed and fulfilled by high and low—
  Let them relearn the Law:

That when the dooms are read,
  Not high nor low shall say:—
'My haughty or my humble head
  Has saved me in this day.'
That, till the end of time,
  Their remnant shall recall
Their fathers' old, confederate crime
  Availed them not at all:

That neither schools nor priests
  Nor Kings may build again
A people with the hearts of beasts
  Made wise concerning men.
Whereby our dead shall sleep
  In honour, unbetrayed,
And we in faith and honour keep
  That peace for which they paid.

THE END

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THE FIVE NATIONS
AND
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